Hafa Adai!

Chamber thumbs down Commerce fee increases. PAGE 2
Marijuana retail store, farm in Tanapag, Puerto Rico OK'd. PAGE 3

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Travel bubble starts in Jan.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE and KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTERS

» Torres shares CNMI's success in fighting COVID-19 with Rotary Club of Guam
» MVA unanimously approves travel bubble

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres expects the partial resumption of tourism from South Korea to the CNMI under a "travel bubble" program that will start next month, January, even as the Marianas Visitors Authority greenlit the program.

Torres disclosed this during an on online speech before the Rotary Club of Guam, while sharing with club members the CNMI's success in fight-

See TRAVEL on Page 4

Bill gives casino commission more power

» Bill will now go to Torres for action
» Rep. Sablan says everyone shares an interest in seeing increased enforcement, accountability for IPI

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of the Representatives unanimously passed yesterday a bill that clarifies and enhances the powers of the Commonwealth Casino Commission. The bill now goes to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres for action.

See BILL on Page 4

Lawmakers hear from PUA recipients

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Members of the CNMI Legislature met last Wednesday in a town hall-style forum with people who claim that they have yet to receive any Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits from the CNMI Department of Labor.

The forum, held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe, saw mem-

See PUA on Page 4

12 NMC students named Chamber scholars

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce awarded last week a total of $12,000 or $1,000 each to 12 Northern Marianas College students as part of efforts to support a local school and their students.

The awarding of scholarships was held at the SCC's general membership meeting

See NMC on Page 4

The 12 students from the Northern Marianas College who are recipients of the 2020 Saipan Chamber of Commerce Scholarship pose with Chamber president Velma Palacios, Chamber executive director Maxine Lazslo, Chamber Education Committee members: Ty Pauling, Nicole Babauta, Ciara Ada, and Vickie Izuka.

BEA CABRERA

FRESH COAT OF PAINT — Chang Neungsik, who chairs the Saipan Korean Community, is seen here applying a fresh coat of blue paint on the handicap parking space of the Micro Beach Pavilion. The Korean Tour Guide Association, led by association chair Yong Mook Choi, and other members of the Saipan Korean Community were also seen at the parking lot repainting the parking curbs, making them look brand new and more visible. This is in addition to the several cleanups the association does every month, said Choi. "We want to make Saipan nice and clean so that when they return, the tourists will be happy," he added.

NEIL FAMA

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- **Yellow**
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- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Dec. 10, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,026	26	7,052
Recovered	6,248	134	6,382
Active	665	26	691
Deaths	113	2	115
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			85,864

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	113	0	113
Traced via Travel Screening	83	0	83
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			113

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases. The CHCC COVID-19 dashboard will be undergoing maintenance until further notice.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

INSIDE

LOCAL
Mount Carmel School remains steadfast in bringing the Christmas spirit this season.
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BUSINESS
Docomo Pacific launches new personalized bundle plans in the CNMI.
PAGE 14

OFF THE WALL
Fauci and Kamala are among the famous names on a mispronounced words list.
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Local

Chamber thumbs down Commerce fee increases

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has asked Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to veto a bill that will increase the fees of the Office of the Registrar of Corporations under the Department of Commerce, saying business owners and entrepreneurs are exhausted and overwhelmed at this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

» **'Business owners, entrepreneurs exhausted, overwhelmed during pandemic'**

In a letter to Torres, Chamber president Velma M. Palacios urged the governor to veto House Bill 21-19 because of the pandemic, weakened economy, the desperate need to encourage entrepreneurship, and the Department of Finance's capacity to modernize its technology without raising fees.

"Raising fees for the sake of raising fees, when online technology should make it more cost-effective and efficient to process applications, is demoralizing to our exhausted business owners and overwhelmed entrepreneurs," said Palacios in the Chamber's letter to Torres Monday.

Last week, the Senate unanimously approved the bill on first and final reading. All eight senators present voted for its passage.

Rep. Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan) introduced the bill in February 2019, saying the fees have been stagnant since the enactment of Executive Order 97-03 in 1998. Since then, there has been an influx of businesses in the CNMI, he added.

The proposed new fees are $150 for the filing of the Articles of Organization; $150, Articles of Incorporation; $250, application for reinstatement following administrative dissolution; $250, application for certificate of authority for foreign corporation; $50, application for amended certificate of authority, among other several fees.

Palacios reiterated the Chamber's previous argument that the best way to create more economic stability for the government is by encouraging entrepreneurship—not discouraging it by raising fees.

See CHAMBER on Page 4

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Cannabis retail store and farm in Tanapag, Puerto Rico OK'd

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Zoning Board approved Wednesday two companies' conditional use applications to put up a cannabis or marijuana retail store in Tanapag and a cannabis farm in Puerto Rico.

At the Zoning board special public hearing at the Commonwealth Zoning Office in Dandan, five board members—chair Tatiana Babauta, vice chair Francisco Aguon, treasurer Perry A. Inos Jr., and members Joe E. Ayuyu Jr. and Kevin Guerrero—voted in favor of the applications of Saipan Select LLC and Marianas Hemp Farms.

Dela Cruz

Babauta

Saipan Select LLC proposes to renovate and occupy an existing 2-story warehouse in Tanapag for its cannabis retail store. The area is zoned as mixed commercial district.

Marianas Hemp Farms proposes to renovate and occupy the second floor of an existing 3-story building in Puerto Rico for its cannabis farm. The site is zoned as mixed commercial district.

Zoning administrator Geralyn C. Dela Cruz said that zoning staff have reviewed the companies' proposals and find them acceptable. Dela Cruz said the zoning staff recommended approving the companies' conditional use permit application if conditions are met.

Among the conditions are that the applicants shall comply with requirements of all regulatory agencies having jurisdiction over the projects, that they control any noise from reaching unacceptable levels beyond its property lines, and they shall ensure that operations do not generate noise, odor, light, and dust that will affect the neighborhood.

Last Dec. 2, the board approved Saipan Select LLC's conditional use application for its plan for a cannabis farm in Tanapag.

Previously, the board approved the conditional use application for a cannabis farm in Chalan Laulau, a cannabis retail store and lounge in Garapan, cannabis or marijuana retail stores and lounges, and cannabis farms in As Mahetog, Capital Hill, and As Teo.

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TRAVEL

From Page 1

ing the spread COVID-19 in the community.

The MVA board, meanwhile, unanimously approved E-Land Group of Companies' proposed plan to carry out the travel bubble in the CNMI with the first batch of tourists expected to arrive on Jan. 8 via a charter flight.

A "travel bubble" is an exclusive arrangement between two countries or destinations, typically between areas with a low number of COVID-19 cases, wherein citizens of both jurisdictions can travel between the two areas for tourism purposes.

Invited to speak yesterday before the Rotary about the CNMI's situation during this pandemic, Torres said the CNMI continues to work on reopening its tourism industry through a travel bubble agreement with source markets such as South Korea and Japan. He said the CNMI, however, remains cautious to ensure that any resumption of flights puts the health and safety of the CNMI people first.

"This can be done, but it must be done through thoughtful and deliberate decisions and cooperation with all stakeholders—our health care officials, first responders, and our tourism industry leaders working together to keep our people safe," Torres said.

With the collaboration that has been developed throughout this crisis, and with months of careful consideration, planning, and needed caution from the Marianas Visitors Authority, the COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Torres said he is excited to see the resumption of tourism from South Korea this January.

He said this will be a "new normal" for the industry, one that will change the way the CNMI operates, with new requirements aimed at keeping residents safe as they go back to their jobs, and a level of normalcy that has been disrupted in these trying months.

MVA share

It was learned at the MVA board meeting yesterday that, as per the travel bubble arrangement with E-Land, the CNMI promises to allocate $55,000 for this initiative, which will only be drawn down if E-Land fails to fill its charter flight with 100 passengers.

MVA member Ivan Quichocho entered the motion to support E-Land's travel bubble and to the cost-share requirement. "None of the monies from the MVA commitment will be utilized and these funds will be used as more of a marketing investment that will only be pulled down if it falls short," he said.

The revised health protocols will consist of three layers: As soon as they arrive, passengers with the travel bubble must show proof of a negative PCR test 72 hours prior to arriving on Saipan. The passengers will then take another test upon arrival and one more test five days after.

Once they arrive, the passengers will be immediately brought to Pacific Islands Club Saipan where they will quarantined for five days. There, they will be able to use the facilities. They will then be transported to Kensington after the fifth day testing comes out negative for everyone aboard the flight.

Quichocho noted that, in terms of safety, this process is more stringent compared to existing protocols, which has only two layers.

"With the third level of testing, its more stringent than the existing protocols that we have now," he said.

MVA board acting chair Gloria Cavanagh said that a lot is riding on the success of the travel bubble. "If this works, I could see not only another flight from Korea, but quite possibly a first flight from Japan. There's a lot riding on this travel bubble, it being the first one as it opens up a new norm for tourists," she said.

She said MVA has been working with the Korea office for months now on the travel bubble. They had just been waiting for a concrete proposal and E-Land was the first partner to step up and give one.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

PUA

From Page 1

bers of the Office of the Minority of the 21st House of Representatives listening to the concerns and questions of an estimated 30 people regarding their PUA benefits, many of whom talked about their struggles with the program. Some vented that they had been waiting for months and have yet to receive a single cent, some said they were wrongfully denied benefits, and majority stated that they were poorly assisted by PUA staff.

According to minority leader Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan), the aim of the meeting is to gather information from constituents to ultimately assist DOL in improving the PUA program. "Our hope is that the testimonies and the findings we gathered will ultimately assist our Department of Labor in improving the delivery of services and accounting for all the money that has been received that really should be distributed to constituents who are in need of this assistance," she said.

All the testimonies, Sablan said, will be compiled and made available to the public as well as the Torres-Palacios administration. "In terms of next steps, we're going to compile our notes from the testimonies that we received and we will be making this report available to the public as well as to colleagues from the Legislature, to the Office of [Delegate] Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan, the [Office of the] Public Auditor, to the [Torres-Palacios] administration, to the Department of Labor, to the Department of Finance, and the governor as well," she said.

Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente, who declined an invitation to the town hall meeting, later said in a statement yesterday that DOL looks forward to reviewing the public comments from the hearing and hope that elected officials can work diligently with the department on educating the public about how these federal guidelines work when running a complex program like PUA.

She added it is "unfortunate that Sablan did not publicly disclose the communications and chose to politically grandstand" with her colleagues even after being educated about the PUA adjudication process as standardized by the U.S. Department of Labor

"We hear and empathize with our claimants' frustration in the complexity of this federal program and federal guidance. In order to ensure the integrity of the program, the future of continued federal support, and the prevention of CNMI liability on fraudulent claims —the Department of Labor must operate within the confines of the applicable federal law and institute safety measures to prevent fraudulent claims," she said.

Benavente added that the department understands that PUA claimants may want answers about their claims and issues they face but there are confidentiality restrictions.

"Many of the general questions, such as reasons for disqualification and reporting requirements, can be answered by the Benefit Rights Handbook published on the department's website, marianaslabor.net. However, in light of confidentiality restrictions, it would be imprudent and insensitive of the CNMI Department of Labor to disclose information on specific or pending claims in a public forum," she said.

Others officials at the town hall meeting were Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Shiela Babuata (D-Saipan), Rep. Richard Lizama (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), and Rep. Franklin Babauta (Ind-Saipan).

NMC

From Page 1

at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom and pivots from the Chamber previous awardees, who were mostly from off-island schools.

"We are very fortunate to collate $12,000 for the scholarship program with the help of our fundraisers like the golf tournament and, of course, the generosity of all of our members. With the pandemic, we thought we weren't going to reach our goal but we were very fortunate to do so," said Chamber president Velma Palacios. "We also are excited because this year we wanted to focus on local educational institutions like NMC and Northern Marianas Technical Institute. Sadly, we didn't get [anyone] from NMTI this year but also glad that 12 students from NMC will be able to put the money to good use."

The 12 Chamber scholars are Amber Quitano (Associate in Science: Nursing); Edieson Aguirre (Bachelor of Science in Education major in Special Education); Glen John Matalog (Bachelor of Science major in Business Management); Hee Jung Sin (Bachelor of Science in Education major in Elementary Education); Joselito Gomez (Bachelor of Science in Education major in Elementary Education); Katelyn Rabang (Associate of Arts major in Business); Leila Nawaz (Bachelor of Science in Education major in Elementary Education); Regina De Vero (Bachelor od Science in Education major in Rehabilitation and Human Services); Thomas William DLC. Benavente (Associate in Arts major in Liberal Arts); Trinity Camacho (Associate in Applied Science major in Criminal Justice); Victoria Bellas (Bachelor of Science major in Business Management/Associate in Arts major in Social Work); and Yi Huang (Associate of Science major in Nursing/Bachelor of Science major in Business Management Accounting).

The Chamber Education Committee Panel was composed of Ty Pauling of Hyatt Regency Saipan, Ciara Ada of Xerox Saipan, Nicole Babauta of the CNMI Small Business Development Center, and Vikie Izuka of First Hawaiian Bank.

According to Pauling, choosing the best is always difficult every year. "At the end of the day, in going through the process, you are not only dealing with the facts—GPA scores, recommendations, and essays. We are also dealing with a person. It's the kind of the job of the committee to push through through standard questions in the interview process so we can really get to know that person and understand what's their passion," he said. "… Getting to know the person is the unique part of our scholarship because its just not about the performance but also about passion, the way that they present themselves and the way they want to represent the CNMI."

CHAMBER

From Page 2

"Encouraging entrepreneurship looks like expanding opportunities for businesses to form and decreasing barriers that halter their success," Palacios said.

Encouraging entrepreneurship, she said, will lead to higher Business Gross Revenue Tax collection, more employment opportunities, and better services for the community.

Palacios said that when the bill first came to House of the Representatives in the spring of 2019, the Chamber worked with the Commerce secretary to find ways to both encourage entrepreneurship while assisting Commerce is moving to an online platform. Palacios said it was promised that the increase in fees for Commerce would be used to modernize the department by moving all filing online by 2022. She said these discussions with the Chamber, Commerce, the House Ways and Means Committee led to the draft of HB 21-19, HS1.

However, Palacios said, the CNMI is now in a vastly different economy than it was in the spring of 2019 when these discussions first arose. "Now more than ever, we need to encourage families to start businesses and for businesses to expand their operations," she said.

Raising fees in the middle of a pandemic, Palacios said, will result in the reverse intended effect, lowering overall government revenue as more people either illegally operate or avoid starting their own businesses altogether.

"A 50%-150% increase in fees may not seem significant to the government, but for the entrepreneur who is bootstrapping their new business with the hopes for their families, it means a great deal," she added.

Similar legislation was introduced during the 15th, 16th, and 20th Legislature, but no actions were taken.

BILL

From Page 1

All 20 representatives voted to the passage of House Bill 21-11, which also made changes to the Commonwealth Code, given the commission's unique regulatory oversight of the casino industry in the Commonwealth.

House vice speaker Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) introduced the legislation in February 2019. The Senate unanimously passed the bill with amendments last March 13.

Under the bill, CCC, and not the Finance secretary as provided under the current Commonwealth Code, shall establish and maintain a CCC regulatory fee fund to be kept separate and apart from the general fund of the government.

The bill provides that, as an autonomous agency, CCC shall determine its staffing levels for full-time, part-time, seasonal and temporary employees.

The bill also gives, among other things, CCC the authority to issue a casino license. Current law gives that power to the Commonwealth Lottery Commission.

CCC board chair Edward C. Deleon Guerrero said in an interview that this bill has been in the Legislature since the 19th Legislature. It came up in the 20th, and then this 21st Legislature. Deleon Guerrero hopes that Torres would support the bill.

"It would strengthen the casino commission's ability to enforce the mandates of the original gaming law, [Public Law] 18-56. And would really clarify and remove some of the ambiguities," Deleon Guerrero said.

He said the CCC has worked diligently with the appropriate regulatory body this past four-and-a-half to five years to make sure that IPI is in compliance. "We, the CCC, do not have the authority on quite a lot of areas that we are blamed for," he said, citing as an example that anything having to do with the building itself that falls within the purview of Department of Public Works and its Building Safety Code Section. However, he said, CCC always gets blamed for any safety issue involving the casino licensee, Imperial Pacific.

On the labor issue, the chairman said it is his understanding that the CNMI Department of Labor doesn't have jurisdiction over employers with more than 500 employees. "That's the U.S. Department of Labor," he said.

Also, the CNMI does not have the authority to enforce Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules as that's a federal law, Deleon Guerrero said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

Babauta bill shortens voter registration, residency rule

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Newly-sworn in Rep. Franklin R. Babauta (Ind-Saipan) has introduced a bill that will shorten the closing of the period to register to vote and voting residency duration to 30 days.

Babauta, who is an independent representative from precinct 1 but aligned with the Democratic Party, pre-filed House Bill 21-129, with seven others as co-authors.

The bill also proposes to amend the definitions of "domicile" and "residency" in the current election law so that it is clear that only bona fide CNMI residents are eligible to vote absentee. The bill will also align the days allowed to change election precinct so it is consistent with the closing of the voter registration and the residency duration requirement.

Babauta stated in the bill that the current election law provides, among others, that "no person shall be eligible to vote who has not resided in the Commonwealth at least 120 days prior to the election day." Babauta said this provision—as established by Public Law 12-18 that was signed on Sept. 14, 2000—was less than two months before the November 2000 election. In signing Public Law 12-18, then-governor Pedro P. Tenorio cautioned the Legislature that extending the residency requirement from 45 days to 120 days is "vulnerable to challenge on constitutional grounds," Babauta said.

Babauta

In the CNMI, the lawmaker said, the residency duration requirement is 120 days before the election and the voter registration closes 60 days before an election. He said the 120 days residency requirement is too long, unjustified, and vulnerable to challenge on constitutional grounds. He pointed out that the difference between the residency duration and the closing of voter registration is also problematic.

"It means that if you move to the Commonwealth 59 days before an election, with the intention of making the Commonwealth one's permanent home and vote in the next election, one is prevented from voting because one (a) did not meet the 120 residency requirement, and (b) missed the voting registration window," said Babauta in the bill.

He said the definitions of "domicile" and "residency" are also problematic. Babauta said that current Commonwealth law requires absentee voters to give a reason to vote outside the election district from where the voter is registered. However, he said, an absentee voter from outside the Commonwealth is allowed to vote absentee without any reason or excuse for not being in the Commonwealth to vote on election day, regardless whether the person owns a home, works, and pays personal income or property taxes outside the Commonwealth.

Babauta said the purpose of his bill is to shorten the residency duration from 120 days to 30 days. He said it will shorten the closing of voter registration from not less than 60 days before the election day to not less than 30 days.

Babauta said the bill will amend the definitions of "domicile" and "residency" so that it is clear that only bona fide CNMI residents are eligible to vote.

The bill's co-authors are House Speaker Blas Jonathan Tenorio Attao (R-Saipan), and Reps. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan), Richard T. Lizama (D-Saipan), Donald M. Manglona (D-Rota), Christina Sablan (D-Saipan), John Paul P. Sablan (R-Saipan), and Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan).

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Saipan middle school students present Conservation Action Plans

The Schools for Environmental Conservation program of the Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance hosted students and their class advisers for their final presentations and award ceremony at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom last Dec. 4, 2020.

The theme of this year's focus for SFEC was "Learning About, Interacting With, and Actively Conserving the CNMI's Natural Resources." Students from Dandan Middle School, Hopwood Junior High School, Mount Carmel School, Saipan Community School, and Saipan International School completed the six-monthlong SFEC program, and each school group gave presentations of their results and Conservation Action Plans to those in attendance at the event.

MYCAPITURESPHOTOGRAPHY

Students, teachers, school principals and MINA board members pose for a picture at the 2020 Schools for Environmental Conservation final presentation and awards ceremony last Dec. 4, 2020, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

Now in its 11th year, the SFEC program provides opportunities for students to learn about and work on projects that they design and implement on their school campuses that focus on specific environmental issues. The theme for 2020's SFEC program was on Climate Change, and students and teachers together engaged in educational and field activities. Through experiential learning from these natural laboratories, participants in the SFEC program learn about the critical role that the CNMI's natural resources play in the islands' sustainability and gain skills that promote and encourage environmental stewardship throughout the islands.

MINA would like to acknowledge their partners from the CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality and the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources for helping to make the SFEC program a success, and a special thanks for sharing of their expertise goes out to Division of Coastal Resources Management marine biologists Dave Benavente, Dr. Denise Perez, and John Iguel; GIS specialist Rodney Camacho; watershed coordinator Zak Williams; NOAA Coral Reef Management fellow Ilan Bubb; Coral Initiative Communications coordinator Mallory Muna; Coastal Zone communications assistant Colleen Flores; DLNR public outreach specialist Carey Demapan; Micronesia Challenge Young Champion Pheona David; and NMC School of Education intern Sheila Aliven. In addition to these dedicated environmentalists, MINA would also like to thank the evening's guest speaker, 2019 Miss Marianas Shannon Sasamoto, who participated in the SFEC program in 2016; Miss Earth Ria Terlaje; and emcee Romolo Orsini.

Funding for MINA's SFEC program is supported by the Margaret Cargill Philanthropies and Micronesia Conservation Trust who are dedicated to the region's aim to meet the goals of the Micronesia Challenge: 2020 Milestone and Beyond.

MINA is a 501(c)(3) environmental nonprofit organization and has been serving the Marianas for fifteen years. MINA fosters community and science-based conservation programs to enhance and sustain the CNMI's environments and cultures. If you'd like to support MINA's efforts in empowering communities for conservation, contact minaoutreach@gmail.com or make a voluntary contribution by visiting our website at www.minapacific.org. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
JVA No. 21 – 015

Opening Date: December 04, 2020 • Closing Date: December 17, 2020

POSITION TITLE:	Warehouse Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	CFO/Warehouse
LOCATION:	Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	$16,511.00 - $19,850.00 per annum, Non -Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or his/her designee.

Duties:
- The Warehouse Assistant assists with physical inventories of stock, materials and supplies; takes material counts and/or verifies counts.
- Prepares, packs and delivers materials and supplies; receives and responds to division and department material needs and requests.
- Loads and unloads materials and supplies; assists with offloading containers and materials; operates forklift as needed.
- Verifies quantities and quality of materials received; prepares receiving documents and reports; routes and delivers paperwork.
- Maintains order and in worksites and warehouse areas; stocks and restocks inventory materials in designated bin locations; may assist in determining whether materials are scrapped or salvaged.
- Prepares and issues materials for air, sea or postal delivery; reviews pick lists and verifies quantities and material accuracy.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School diploma, GED or (AS) through the Adult Basic Education.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Preparing, packing, issuing and delivering materials and supplies; Verifying material quantities and quality; Providing attention to detail; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- Licensing:
  - Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
  - Forklift Operator license (preferred)

- Physical Demands:
  - Occasional lifting of objects; Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Jury trial begins for 2 in rape case

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The trial of two men who were allegedly part of a group of four who raped a woman began Wednesday at the CNMI Superior Court with the selection of a jury

The jury selection in the case against Richmond Ray Keybond and Joseph Aquino Saimon continued yesterday at 8:30am before Superior Court Associate Judge Theresa Kim-Tenorio.

Only two of the four men are standing trial because one of the defendants, Christopher Aquino Saimon, was found mentally incompetent to stand trial and the other, Romeo Aquino Saimon, passed away in 2019.

The four men were accused of raping a drunk woman in 2018.

According to court documents, the alleged victim, a 31-year-old woman, reported that on June 24, 2018, she was drinking with Romeo Saimon and Christopher Saimon, and Keybond because she had an argument with her former boyfriend, Joseph Saimon.

The victim reported that she was drunk and that the next thing she remembers was she was in the bedroom and Romeo Saimon was on top of her.

She said she passed out and later saw Keybond on top of her. She said she also saw Christopher Aquino on top of her and that she passed out. Romeo Aquino and Keybond allegedly sexually assaulted her twice.

She told police that she did not consent to have sex with the three suspects.

According to Keybond, he had been drinking with the woman and that she had an argument with Joseph Saimon.

Keybond said his father, Romeo Saimon, took the alleged victim into her room because she was too drunk and vomited on herself.

Keybond said his father, Romeo, took a while to come back and when he opened the door he saw him on top of her.

He said his father told him to close the door and leave. He said she appeared to be asleep.

Keybond said he left the room, but later went back and had sex with her.

Mt. Carmel soldiers on with Christmas shows this holiday season

Despite all the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mount Carmel School remains steadfast in bringing the Christmas spirit this season with several shows this weekend and next weekend.

This weekend, the school's award-winning concert band and will hold its 3rd Annual Christmas Concert. Led by maestro Julian Greening and featuring the Su-San Band as a special guest, the concert will showcase dozens of students performing a wide variety of Christmas songs. The concert will be presented on Saturday, Dec. 12, at Mount Carmel Cathedral, with doors opening at 4pm and the concert starting at 4:30pm. The concert will also be streamed on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mtcarmelcnmi. To comply with COVID-19 Mitigation Guidelines, this will be a ticketed event with limited seats available.

Next weekend, the school's Theatre Club will host a Family Movie Night featuring holiday shorts and a special screening of the club's epic teenage romantic comedy from 2011, Zero to Hero. The Family Movie Night will be held in the school quad (or in the auditorium in the event of rain) on Thursday, Dec. 17, at 7pm. Tickets at $5 each can be purchased in the Business Office or at the door. To comply with COVID-19 Mitigation Guidelines, the movie night will be a ticketed event with limited seats available.

The school will then present its 68th Annual Christmas Program on Friday, Dec. 18, at 7pm, in the school quad (or in the auditorium in the event of rain). The Christmas Program is a cherished tradition that dates back to the school's founding year 1952, making it the longest continuously running performing arts program on island. To ensure everyone's safety and to comply with COVID-19 mitigation guidelines, this year's program will be a hybrid show, featuring both videos of each grade level performing Christmas songs and live performances from members of the Knight family. After the program, all performances will be uploaded on the school's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/c/MountCarmelSchool. Again, to comply with COVID-19 Mitigation Guidelines, the program will be ticketed event with limited seats available and tickets available from students' teachers.

In addition to these shows, the school continues to invite the community to avail of its first ever Holiday Coupon Fundraiser. Each coupon booklet costs only $50 and is filled with coupons valued up to $400 from your favorite local establishments, including Fishing Tackle, Herman's Bakery, Kensington Saipan Hotel, T Bar, Tribe Marianas, Bubba Gump, and more. Proceeds from the fundraiser will aid the school's academic programs and services, infrastructural improvements, and COVID-19 mitigation efforts. To purchase a booklet, visit the Business Office.

For more information about these shows or the school, visit www.mountcarmelsaipan.com. ***(PR)***

Mount Carmel School's Concert Band at the 2020 Tumon Bay Music Festival, where the band earned a Silver Award at the festival. The band will hold its 3rd Annual Christmas Concert this Saturday, Dec. 12. MCS

OPA notice to all 2020 election candidates and political parties

All certified candidates must file a detailed "Campaign Statement of Account," as required under 1 CMC § 6424.

This itemized financial statement, prepared with the advice and co-signature of the candidate's treasurer, must show the specific source(s), name(s) of contributor(s), and amount(s) of contributions and expenses.

The Office of the Public Auditor is mandated to administer the filing of such statements. Failure to file a complete, signed, dated and verified Statement by Dec. 23, 2020, shall subject you to a fine of up to $100 per day for each date the statement is late.

The "Campaign Statement of Account form, suggested reports, and supporting schedules are available on OPA's website at www.opacnmi.com or the Commonwealth Election Commission's website at www.votecnmi.gov.mp. Note that filing of a "Campaign Statement of Account" form is mandatory.

The act also requires that the statement be verified under oath by the candidate/political party and the candidate's/political party's treasurer. OPA will provide free notary service to those who wish to avail themselves of this service. (Proper identification bearing both the photo and signature of the candidate and treasurer must be provided). Be advised that OPA is closed every Monday due to austerity and on legal holidays. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI)
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS (DPL)
Tel.: (670) 234-3751 • Website: www.dpl.gov.mp • Email: dpl@dpl.gov.mp

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public land in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot 057 E 18, Lot 057 E 15 and Lot 057 E 29, containing a total area of approximately 6,603 square meters, more or less, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. Copies of the location of the parcels are available at the Department of Public Lands and website www.dpl.gov.mp for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is A & M Corporation. The list of officers for A & M Corporation are Mrs. Maria S. Palacios, as President, and Mr. Arnold I. Palacios, as Secretary/ Treasurer.

iii. The proposed lease is compliant with DPL regulations and was negotiated by the officers and directors of A & M Corporation, mainly Mrs. Maria S. Palacios.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of a operating a Warehouse, Maintenance, Repair Shop, Carpentry Shop, Management Office and other related activities.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term of each lease agreement is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property plus the applicable percentage of Business Gross Receipts in DPL's regulation.

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; 1st floor of the De'Ana Commercial Building, Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of PM Building, Tinian. A copy will also be available online at www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before December 11, 2020 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

NUTISIA PUT I MAPROPONI NA ATKILON TANU' PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lai Pupliku 15-2, i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku ha nå'inutisia guini put I intension ñani para u nama'atkila palu na tanu' pupbliku giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Marianas Siha. I manintiresåo na petsona siha gi halum pupbliku heneråt siña muna'na'halum upiñon, imfotmasion, pat testimoñiun kinentra gi tinahguin prinoponi siha para I atkilon tanu' pupbliku. Kumu mås mo'na mapribeniyini Lai Pupbliku 15-2, I sigienti na pettanesi na imfotmasion ni madimånda ni para u mapupblika.

i. I maproponi na atkilon tanu' pupbliku madiskribi komu Lot 057 E 18, Lot 057 E 15 yan Lot 057 E 29, ni ha kunsisisti i åriagikå si guaha 6,603 square meters, mås pat menus, ni gaigi gi Lower Base, iya Saipan. I kopian i pumalu managuaha gi Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku yan gi website www.dpl.gov.mp para rinikono simientu.

ii. The prospective lessee i A & M Corporation. I listan ufisiåt siha para i A & M Corporation si Siñora Maria S. Palacios, komu Presidenti, yan si Siñot Arnold I. Palacios, komu Sekritåriu/Tresureru.

iii. I maproponi na atkilon"compliant" yan i regulasion DPL yan manigosiu ni ufisiåt yan direktot nu i A & M Corporation, mayot menti si Siñora Maria S. Palacios.

iv. I lessee debina u usa i lugåt para atyu ha' na rason "operating" i "Warehouse, Maintenance, Repair Shop, Carpentry Shop, Management Office" yan ottru manasosiåt na rason.

I tema nu i maproponi na kuntrå tanat kilon sabenti singku (25) åñus na tiempu.

I maproponi na atkilon gikada' såkkan gi durånti i temani kontrå tanat kilon mapegagi pusientus nu ibålin"appraised fair market" i propiedåt yan i aplikåblina pusientusnu Risibun Hina'halum Bisnis gi halum regulasion i DPL.

v. I kopian i maproponina kuntrå tanak kilon siña machuli' gi ufisinan Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku, ni gaigi gi Sigundu (2nd) na bibiendan I JoetenDandan Commercial Building iya Dandan, Saipan, giprimet (1st) na bibiendani De'Ana Commercial Building, iyaSongsongnasengsong, Luta; pat giprimet (1st) nabibiendan I PM Building, giya Tini'an. I kopia mana guaha lokkui' gi online gi www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. I Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku tåya' ha risibi tinahguin propositu siha para u ma' atkila I masuhetu na tanu' pupbliku gi Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. I Sekritårian Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku debina u aksepta tinigi' upiñon, imfotmasion, testimoniun kinentra pat tinahguin priniponi ginin I manintirisåo na pattida siha gi pat åntis di Disembre 11, 2020 giufisinan Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha ni gaigi giya Saipan, Luta pat Tinian.

ARONGORONGOL TOULAP REEL POMMWOL ATKKILÓÓNOL FALUWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) reel Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap e attotoowow arongorong reel igha re mángemángil rebwe atkkilaay akkåáw faluweer toulap llól Seipél, Commonwealth Téél Falúw kka Efáng llól Marianas. Schóókka re mwuschel isiisilong kkapas, data, views, ngáre angiingi reel pommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap. Eyoor sángi Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, arongorong ikka e amwirimwiritiw ebw eakkatééwow.

i. Pommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap e bwáálóbwe Lot 057 E 18, Lot 057 E 15 me Lot 057 E 29, e lo bwe 6,603 reel square meters, elapeló ngáre eghus, iye e lo Lower Base, Seipél. Pappidil Falúw yeel eyoor me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap me bwalwóól website me www.dpl.gov.mp ngáre u mwuschel amwuri.

ii. Pommwol schóól atkkilóón nge A & M Corporation. List-al officers ngáli A & M Corporation nge Mrs. Maria S. Palacios, bwe President, me Mr. Arnold I. Palacios, bwe Sekkretóóriyo/ Treasurer.

iii. Pommwol atkkilóón nge e angúúngú fengál me mwóghutughutúl DPL me e abwungubwung sángi officers me directors-il A & M Corporation, spesiatmente Mrs. Maria S. Palacios.

iv. Schóól atkkilóón ebwe yááyá falúw ngáli mwóghutughutúl "Warehouse", "Maintenance", "Repair Shop", "Carpentry Shop", "Management Office" me akkåáw mwóghutughutikka e bwal schuulong.

Pommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón nge ruweigh me limoow ráágh.

Pommwol atkkilóónol ghal ráágh ngáligh aleew abwungu bwungúlat kkilóónnge e lo reel percentage-il "appraised fair market value" reel falúwfengál me "applicable percentage" reel "Business Gross Receipts" llól mwóghutughutúl DPL.

v. Pappidil pommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón emmwel ubwe bweibwogh mereel Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer toulap, iye e lo 2nd floor reel Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Dandan, Seipél; 1st floor reel De'Ana Commercial Building, Apilómwol Songsong, Luuta' ngáre 1st floor reel PM Building, Tchiliyól. Ebwalyoor pappidil mille online me www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap rese bweibwogh pommw iye e siiweli falúw iye re apasa me Lower Base, Seipél.

vii. Sekkretóóriyal Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap emmweli lbweibwogh ischil mángemáng, views, angii ngáre pommwiye re siiweli sángi schóókka re mwuschel wóól ngáremmwalil Disembre 11, 2020 me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap me Seipél, Luuta, ngáre Tchiliyól.

Joeten foundation donates to Club 200

Joeten Daidai Foundation representatives pledge $5,000 for the 32nd Annual American Red Cross Club 200 fundraiser at the Joeten Susupe on Tuesday morning. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Joeten Daidai Foundation has pledged $5,000 for the 32nd Annual American Red Cross Club 200 fundraiser as representatives from both organizations gathered together at Joeten Susupe on Tuesday morning.

"We are extremely grateful for the support of the Joeten Group of Companies over the years. Their generous contribution to the American Red Cross enables us to put our humanitarian mission into action," said Tayna Belyeu-Camacho, board chair of the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter.

"The American Red Cross has proven themselves time and time again in the face of endless natural disasters," said Foundation executive director Patty T. Palacios. "Their mission of helping alleviate human suffering never really stops. Because of their commitment in helping the people of the CNMI, the Joeten Daidai Foundation has chosen to donate to the Red Cross NMI Chapter."

This year's fundraising event will be exclusively online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's theme will be "Wild About the Red Cross" and includes fantastic door prizes, auction items and a live streaming event on Dec. 19, a Saturday.

Help support the Red Cross humanitarian work by purchasing tickets. Tickets are only $50 each and available online at www.redcross.org/club200. Every $50 ticket purchase will have a chance to win door prizes. If buyers don't have a credit or debit card, contact the Red Cross office at 234- 3459 for more information. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR A&E SERVICES
CUC-RAES-21-012

Engineering Consulting Services for CUC's Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed RAES Proposals from qualified firms for engineering consultant services for CUC's solar photovoltaic and renewable energy systems in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RAES package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the AES Proposal marked *"CUC-RAES-21-012, Engineering Consulting Services for CUC's Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems"*, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than December 30, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit RAES Proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the RAES Proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RAES requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RAES under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RAES under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 15, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Anne Crockett, CUC Senior Electrical Engineer via email address anne.crocket@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior, via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all RAES Proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RAES, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All RAES Proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Caravan of Food signs on as NMC ProaPerks Partner

Caravan of Food is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks Partner, joining many other businesses and organizations that provide exclusive discounts and benefits for NMC students, employees, and alumni.

All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now avail of a 10% discount on purchases at the restaurant.

Caravan of Food joins the growing list of ProaPerks partners, such as 153 Restaurant, 4EVER CNMI, Alamo Car Rental, All Star Sporting Goods, Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, Bubba Gump, Docomo Pacific, Dollar Days (Garapan), Enterprise Car Rental, Ete Cafe, Fishing Tackle and Sporting Goods, Fork and Spoon, Garapan Restaurant, Great Harvest, Kiki's, National Car Rental, Natural Nail & Spa, NMC Bookstore, Latte Built, Salty's, Saipan Computer Services, Surf Club, Shirley's Coffee Shop, Tribe Marianas, Triple J Motors, The Pacific Supply, and Pena House Boutique.

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students, and employees. For more information, visit marianas.edu/proaperks.

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include NMC alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

Caravan of Food is now a NMC ProaPerks partner. All card-carrying members of the ProaPerks program can now get 10% off at Caravan of Food.

NMC

TTT fundraising raffle on Saturday

Tasi to Table Inc. will be holding its "Reel in the Holidays" fundraising raffle this Saturday, Dec. 12, which will feature a16-foot aluminum hull boat as its grand prize.

TT Inc. partnered up with Coral Reef Marine Center Guam, Mercury Marine, and Morning Star Boats to offer this boat as the raffle's grand prize.

Equipped with a brand-new engine, which was recently installed by Advance Marine Saipan Corp., the boat comes with a trailer and other amenities that makes this prize a sure win for one lucky winner.

"It's been over a year since the program established itself and the interest continues to grow. We are hopeful that one day we will have the TTT program in all three populated islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota," said TTT vice president Wayne Pangelinan, adding that AMSC supports the youth program and is elated to continue their support as TTT grows. ***(Justine Nauta)***

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Bank of Saipan deposits are insured by a private payment guaranty, which pays up to $250,000 per account. Bank of Saipan is not federally insured.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com
Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
MEMBER
The Associated Press
Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Uniform policy: Grant Gen. Lloyd Austin a waiver to run the Defense Department

AP

Retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin, the Biden administrations choice to be secretary of defense, listens during an event at The Queen theater in Wilmington, Del., Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020.

Lloyd Austin knows the military top to bottom, and that's good. After graduating West Point in 1975, the retired general served the Army and his nation for four decades, rising to lead the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan, then to command troops in Iraq, then to run U.S. Central Command.

Even as the prospect of his becoming the first Black defense secretary inspires a diverse nation and military, Austin's successes and failures on these many tours of duty warrant serious scrutiny from the Senate, as does his consulting work and service on various corporate boards since retiring.

What need not reflexively trip up his nomination as Joe Biden's choice to oversee the Defense Department is that he hung up the uniform in 2016, which means he'll need a waiver from Congress to run the Pentagon.

Federal law requires a military officer wait an arbitrary seven years, down from 10, before taking over the DOD. The sound reason: Ever since George Washington went from politician to general to politician again, America has prided itself on ironclad civilian control of the armed forces. Here, in stark contrast to lesser nations, men with chests full of medals take orders from officials elected by the people, and the latter never reflexively defer to the former.

It is well and good to test Austin on his independence from what Gen.-President Dwight Eisenhower in 1961 dubbed the military-industrial complex, but there's no magic to the particular seven-year cooling-off period.

If most senators thought retired Gen. Jim Mattis—who'd been in civilian clothes four years when Donald Trump tapped him—deserved a chance, they should also extend one to Austin. After voting no on a waiver, New York's Kirsten Gillibrand was the sole senator opposing Mattis' confirmation. Will she stand on principle now against Austin?

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Why so many people want to believe the election was stolen

By AARON C. KAY and MARK J. LANDAU
LOS ANGELES TIMES

A month after the presidential election, President Donald Trump's claim that the election was rigged to benefit Joe Biden has been debunked by numerous Republican state elections officials. Dozens of lawsuits filed by the Trump campaign and its proxies have been rejected by judges in both state and federal courts. There is no evidence to support any of the campaign's baseless charges of election fraud, though its power to undermine faith in American democracy is real.

Yet millions of Americans—including about 70% to 80% of Republicans—believe the election was stolen. Why?

One standard answer is that Trump's backers will believe anything he says. Another perspective, popular among some psychologists, is that people filter ambiguous information through an ideological lens, preferring interpretations that favor their political affiliations.

But in this case, these explanations seem insufficient. People follow charismatic leaders and selectively process political information, but they do not typically cling to a belief that contradicts all available evidence.

Understanding the fallout from the intense polarization of this election will take time. But research into social and political psychology can offer some insight into this response from Trump supporters.

Whether by accident or design, the election fraud narrative features three characteristics that supercharge its psychological appeal: It makes a complex and hostile world seem orderly, controllable and certain.

First, note that Trump and his supporters are suggesting a very specific reason for their loss: fraud. They are not arguing Biden's victory is due to accidental miscounting or a random software error; rather, that it is the result of systematic ballot tampering and voting software manipulation. For psychological reasons, this is a crucial distinction.

People want to view the world as predictable rather than chaotic. The possibility that many independent counties and states all, by chance, made a series of random mistakes skewing election results in the same direction does not fit with this deep-seated motivation.

Claiming intentional fraud, by contrast, offers a single explanation for what would otherwise need to be an improbable series of coincidences. The fraud narrative rejects the unwanted election result in a way that satisfies the desire to view the world as orderly.

In a recent study, we asked Republicans and Democrats to explain why news sources would ever publish erroneous news stories. They tended to characterize bad stories in outlets they perceived to be ideologically opposite to their views as intentionally "fake" rather than the result of accidental incompetence. And the stronger a person's self-reported desire for order in the world, the more that person preferred to view objectionable news stories as intentionally fabricated. Similarly, the election fraud narrative can shield people from the idea of blind chance deciding their fate.

To be compelling, the fraud narrative also needs to be paired with another important element: an enemy. While the exact nature of this enemy shifted under Trump's volatile messaging, it usually stands for a vast underground network of liberal organizations (the "Radical Left"), powerholders (e.g., the Clintons), private corporations (e.g., Big Tech), and policymakers (the so-called "deep state").

On the surface, the appeal of this message is puzzling. Why would people want to believe that powerful malevolent agents are conspiring behind the scenes to sabotage their goals? Yet, in the face of bad news, the idea of being the target of an enemy may feel less distressing than being subject to arbitrary, unpredictable forces like natural disasters, accidents or pathogens.

And the more powerful, nebulous and covert the enemy, the more psychologically useful it is for sense-making. If the enemy is not portrayed as powerful, then it's harder to imagine it being responsible for large-scale negative outcomes. And if the enemy is not portrayed as operating in the shadows, then it cannot be viewed as responsible for a multitude of diverse outcomes.

Anxiety can heighten this psychological response. In a 2008 study, participants were randomly assigned to think about hazards beyond their control (e.g., vehicle accidents) or other negative but controllable events. In a subsequent, seemingly unrelated, context, participants who were reminded of uncontrollable hazards believed more strongly that the presidential candidate they opposed (Barack Obama or John McCain) was working behind the scenes to illegally influence the election (e.g., by tampering with voting machines).

These findings suggest that attributing misfortunes to an unseen enemy or network of enemies can help people cope with

See ELECTION on Next Page

These people were so much more than 'OK, boomer'

By CORY FRANKLIN
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

This year has been an *annus horribilis*, including 275,000 COVID-19 deaths to date. Many newsmakers from the past have died as well, some from COVID, some not. Most of those who died are known barely, if at all, by today's generation. When writer Russell Baker perused obituaries of those from his generation, he called himself "a creature from another planet" enjoying a "harmlessly spiteful pleasure" — young people who could never enjoy his contemporaries and their accomplishments.

My take on the 2020 obituaries differs. Instead of spiteful, I feel sad for those who will never experience the enjoyment and satisfaction of:

The surge of pride witnessing John Lewis join arms with Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights icons marching from Selma to Montgomery. And the aftermath — the emerging awareness that America could be a better country.

The frisson of sitting in the dark at the movies, watching "Goldfinger." Sean Connery as James Bond, dodging the lethal top hat of the henchman, Oddjob, then deftly dispatching him by electrocution just before America's gold supply is rendered radioactive. And the film's finale: Bond cozying up to the gorgeous Honor Blackman, the actress whose character's name will go unmentioned in the interest of good taste.

The delight of seeing Honor Blackman's equally gorgeous replacement, Dame Diana Rigg, on television's "The Avengers" in smashing outfits smiting assorted evildoers. For those who know her only as Lady Olenna Tyrell on "Game of Thrones," you really missed something when Rigg was young.

The joy Carl Reiner brought to one of television's great half-hours: "The Dick Van Dyke Show" episode "Coast to Coast Big Mouth." After Laura Petrie (Mary Tyler Moore) tells a national television audience that Reiner's character, Alan Brady, is bald, she comes to his office to apologize. Reiner tells the toupees lined up on his desk, "There's the woman who put you out of business."

The pleasure of Gale Sayers darting gracefully past the sure tackling Green Bay Packers — Herb Adderley, Willie Davis and Willie Wood — who grasp futilely at air as Sayers glides toward the end zone. On the Packers sideline, the Golden Boy, Paul Hornung, awaiting his chance against the Chicago Bears.

The shock of Chicago Cub fans in 1969 as New York Mets ace Tom Seaver crushes their hopes, pitching a near-perfect game in July and beating them again in a crucial September game that remains forever notorious for the black cat that mysteriously appeared and paraded ominously before the Cubs dugout. The decadeslong curse would live on for another 47 years — the juju of the black cat. Adding insult to injury, Seaver later won his 300th game pitching for the Chicago White Sox.

Elsewhere in baseball, the thrill of Bob Gibson, the St. Louis Cardinal and meanest man on the pitcher's mound, staring down Joe Morgan before he backs Morgan off the plate with a fastball inside. Morgan, no slouch in the competitiveness department, never concedes as he flaps his back arm to keep his batting stance correct, a technique taught to him by White Sox Nellie Fox.

The pure adrenaline when seeing the raw energy of Little Richard play piano and sing "Tutti-Frutti" and "Good Golly, Miss Molly." Little Richard was of the 1950s but his electricity carried into the 1960s and beyond.

The aural experience of Kenny Rogers and the First Edition singing early psychedelia, "Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)." The Beatles and Jefferson Airplane had done psychedelic before, but never exactly like this.

Boomers sometimes display condescension toward young people's lack of a sense of history. Likewise, when millennials and Gen Xers read articles like this, if they read them at all, they are apt to dismiss then as mere bushwa — boomers swaddling themselves in nostalgia ad nauseam. But there can be common ground: The satisfaction and relief these memories provided are thankfully far removed from COVID, politics and the hurly-burly of today's daily life. These people were so much more than "OK, boomer."

Fifty years hence, I sincerely hope younger generations will be lucky enough to recall their deceased contemporaries as fondly.

Cory Franklin is a Wilmette, Illinois, physician and author of the book The Doctor Will See You Now.

Tragic Trumpty Tweeter Tales

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

"Then round and round, and out and in,
All day the puzzled sage did spin;
In vain—it mattered not a pin"
—William Makepeace Thackery (1811-1863)

Four Years of Lies and Spin About Him

A liar lived one time on Pennsylvania Avenue
his hair dyed yellow, white skin, eyes of blue
knowing little he tweeted nights and daytimes too
many of the tweets were about HIM
some on the media and his impeachment case
very few of his lies would he ever erase
when confronted with truth he never lost face
since his face was in love with HIM
lies about immigrants, a wall, and a space force
for four years he spent one day in five on a golf course
he watched stock markets on an international bourse
where banks had business loans involving HIM
on lying and tweeting his efforts would never slack
on Covid 19 he lied, on America he turned his back.

A Mar-a-Lago Trumpery* Tale

(The word trumpery comes from the French language, tromperie*, or* tromper. *It means to deceive, cheat; or something showy but worthless; nonsense; rubbish.)*

"And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair."
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (1772-1834)

In Mar-a-Lago did Trumpery Don
a golf course resort for rich sorts decree
and from there did other businesses run
some gone bankrupt unseen by you or me.
Fleets of lawyers quickly found
his narcissism quite fertile ground
but when payment time came round
of chink and bling there was no sound.
But oh the lies! with nary a query
plenty snorts, reports of rant and seething
spouting many a conspiracy theory
eyes bugged out, shouting, bigly breathing.
In marched Cohen, Flynn, Giuliani, and Barr
to bully for, bolster, and benefit the selfish czar.

Biden's radicalism on immigration

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

One of Joe Biden's first priorities as president will be to risk stoking a new migrant crisis.

After much trial and error, President Donald Trump came up with cooperative arrangements with Mexico and Central American countries that drastically diminished the pressure from asylum-seekers on our southern border.

Biden is pledged to overturn these policies, as well as undermine enforcement and boost immigration numbers across the board. The lie about Biden is that he's "a moderate," when the truth is that he's always been smack in the middle of his party, which is increasingly radical on immigration policy.

The new Democratic Party bristles with contempt for borders and the agents who police them, and its attitude will color everything Biden does.

The migrant crisis that had Trump adopt, then quickly abandon, a zero-tolerance policy that separated children from their parents wasn't of his making. President Barack Obama struggled with the same surge at the border, and many of the photos of children in cages used to condemn Trump date from the Obama years.

Trump only got a handle on the border when he secured deals for help. Mexico agreed to allow migrants seeking asylum in this country to remain in Mexico while their claims were adjudicated. Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, meanwhile, signed safe-third-country agreements, meaning migrants seeking asylum could be sent to those counties to pursue their claims rather than doing so in the U.S.

All of this was necessary to try to close effectively an open-border for migrants from Central America. Once they showed up and claimed asylum here, they were waived into the country and rarely, if ever, removed, even if their asylum claims ultimately failed (as the vast majority did).

Biden has promised a 100-day moratorium on deportations, a measure that will keep us from removing illegal immigrants even when they are released from jails after committing crimes. This is presumably a step toward re-instituting the Obama administration's policy of gutting interior enforcement.

He will restore DACA, the amnesty for illegal immigrants who came here as minors that Obama lawlessly imposed by diktat.

He will propose to Congress a broader amnesty for more than 10 million illegal immigrants. If the Senate balks, as is likely, Biden will be tempted to follow Obama's (and Trump's) example and implement as much as possible through his own authority.

He will boost the number of refugees to more than 100,000 a year, the highest level in 30 years.

Trump's signature failure on immigration was missing the opportunity to pass significant legislation reflecting his priorities through Congress when Republicans controlled both chambers. But, as Steven Camarota of the restrictionist Center for Immigration Studies notes, the net growth of the immigration population still declined markedly.

Despite all of Trump's incendiary rhetoric, the upshot of his approach was entirely reasonable—levels of immigration shouldn't inexorably increase, and immigration policy should be subject to a rigorous test of national interest.

Biden represents a return to the old status-quo assumption that more immigration is, ipso facto, a good thing, at the same time he leads a party that is more zealous on the issue than ever before.

Democrats aren't much interested in immigration controls, and it's entirely possible that, soon enough at the border, it will again be uncontrolled.

ELECTION

From Page 10

feelings of lack of control in their lives. In an election held during a pandemic, that urge may be particularly strong.

Finally, the third characteristic of the election fraud narrative is that it's laden with arguments that cannot be tested by evidence. Political and social ideas that cannot be tested by evidence tend to have a stronger psychological advantage. For example, the view that "same-sex parents are bad because their children will have behavioral problems" can be tested and refuted or supported by evidence while the view that "same-sex marriage is bad because it is immoral" is not subject to such testing. Under threat, people adopt untestable ideas more readily and defend them more vigorously.

Interestingly, the rhetoric surrounding election fraud has become more immune to testing over time. Consider the "deep state" specter. Such a covert enemy can never be interrogated or investigated. To someone convinced of its role in the election, not finding any trace of its involvement is only more evidence of its cunning. Those who insist the election was stolen by the deep state can tell themselves no one can prove them wrong.

Trump's stolen election conspiracy is so dangerous because it plays to people's deep-rooted need for order and control and is impervious to arguments based on evidence. The result of all this? Trump's supporters can feel safe investing in this narrative—and may well continue fighting zealously for it long after Biden takes office.

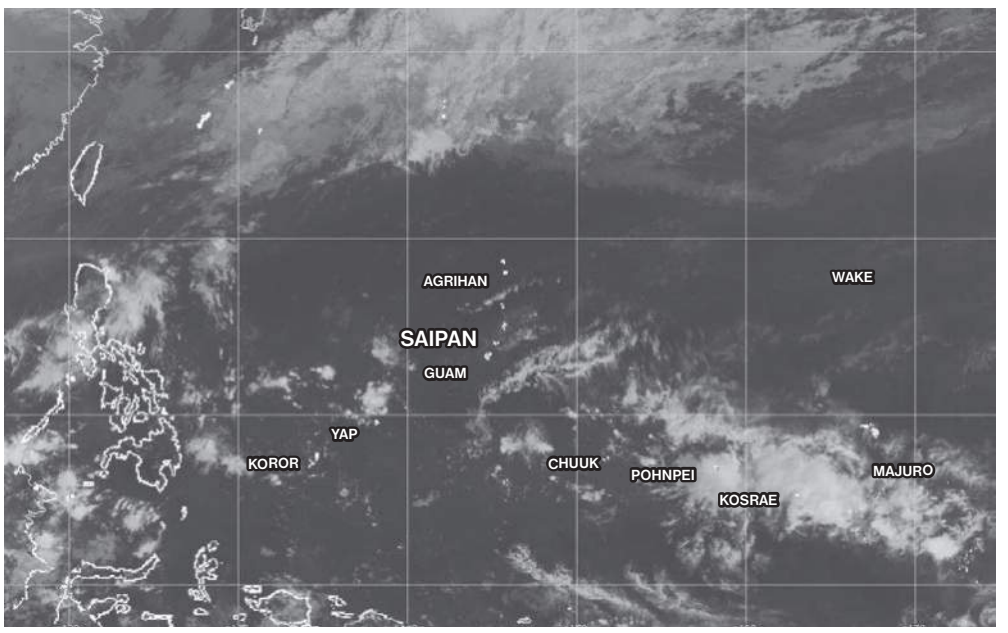
Aaron C. Kay is a professor of management and psychology at Duke University Fuqua School of Business. Mark J. Landau is a professor of psychology at the University of Kansas.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly sunny with a chance of showers and thunderstorms. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:05 AM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Northeast winds and isolated showers prevail over the Marianas this morning.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Saturday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM
Sunday	6:33 AM	5:48 PM
Monday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Tuesday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:40 AM	2:49 PM	-
Saturday	3:40 AM	3:36 PM	-
Sunday	4:42 AM	4:27 PM	-
Monday	5:46 AM	5:23 PM	-
Tuesday	6:51 AM	6:22 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	30° / 18°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	66° / 64°
Honolulu	Showers	81° / 71°
London	Showers	39° / 34°
Los Angeles	Sunny	82° / 51°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	82° / 59°
Miami	Sunny	70° / 55°
New York	Mostly Sunny	44° / 35°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	48° / 39°
Paris	Showers	43° / 34°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 43°
Rome	Rain	59° / 50°
Salem	Sunny	56° / 38°
San Francisco	Sunny	64° / 46°
Seoul	Sunny	27° / 14°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	46° / 34°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	46° / 34°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:46 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.39
10:19 AM	LOW TIDE	0.55
4:30 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.90
11:33 PM	LOW TIDE	-0.13

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Special Feature

Editor's Note: *The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Public Private Partnership initiative has drawn widespread support from the community. Various activities have been conducted and projects have been launched to rally behind the destination enhancement campaign. This section will provide insights on how PPP supporters are committed to the program.*

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS
TOGETHER, WE CAN

5 groups work to enhance the Grotto

Volunteers repaint one of the pavilions at the Grotto. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Five groups have teamed up for one common goal: to spruce up the Grotto.

Bibong Corp., Loco & Taco Dining Bar, Divewish, Tasi & the Ali'is, and International Roller Skates recently joined the Public Private Partnership campaign of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers and chose to adopt the Grotto.

Named as one of world's best dive sites by Marine Diving magazine, the Grotto is popular with both tourists and residents because of its crystal-clear blue waters, rich marine life, and a series of underwater tunnels leading to the open ocean. In peak season, between 700 and 1,000 visitors go to the Grotto. Unfortunately, they also leave trash at the site and its surrounding areas. Facilities at the site have also been worn out by the volume of its visitors and frequency of their visits, coupled with the lack of proper maintenance.

These concerns were raised in past several years in a call to protect one of the most treasured sites of the islands and the five new groups involved in GCEA's destination enhancement initiative want to do their part in keeping the Grotto clean and safe for people to continue to enjoy the beauty of the collapsed underwater cavern.

"As residents of the CNMI, we care about [the] Grotto and the entire islands. The Grotto is a great place for diving and a lot of people are in awe with its natural and unique beauty," said International Roller Skates general manager Doyi Kim.

Less than a month after signing up with the PPP initiative, the five groups have twice done cleanup drives at their adopted site and did minor improvement works.

Last month, 32 volunteers from the five groups did a cleanup drive at the Grotto and its surroundings. The two pavilions were repainted, along with the railings on the stairs leading down to the Grotto, while the parking area was cleared of overgrown bushes. The groups also identified other improvement projects needed at the site, including replacing the ashtrays made from used drums and some plastic materials.

Two weeks after their first cleanup, volunteers from the five groups returned to the Grotto and built concrete ashtrays.

Bibong Corp., Loco & Taco Dining Bar, Divewish, Tasi & the Ali'is, and International Roller Skates will continue with the repainting jobs and cleanup in the coming months. They are also looking into fixing the restroom, putting up lookout/picnic tables and tents, and cleaning up the curbs and filling potholes in the parking area. Putting up directional/ instructional and safety signages are also being planned to organize people lining up to head down the Grotto.

"This is the best time [when no visitors are allowed to come] to work on improving our tour sites. When we welcome tourists back, they will definitely see changes at [the] Grotto. We are honored to be on board the PPP program and excited to see the enhancements in the different sites," Loco & Taco Dining Bar general manager and owner Mickey Kim said. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A worker spreads cement on the first batch of concrete ashtrays that will replace the ones made from plastic materials.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The five groups that will take care of the Grotto show a sample of concrete ashtrays and benches they are planning to build at the site.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A volunteer bush cuts the ground at the Grotto during a clean-up drive last month.

Business

Docomo Pacific launches 'LINK' bundles in CNMI

» Bundle plans tailored for your needs

TAMUNING, Guam—Docomo Pacific, regional leader in innovation, telecommunications, and entertainment, launches new personalized bundle plans in the CNMI.

The modern home revolves around strong and reliable connections. Those connections enable families to work and learn from home, to bond over family-friendly TV shows, and to live full lives on-the-go. Taking up a combination of services is often called a "bundle." Bundles are often viewed as expensive or ill-suited. Until now…

Docomo Pacific invites customers to say goodbye to unfriendly, complicated, and expensive bundles that lack flexibility to meet their needs. We are giving our customers the power to choose the services and plans that are best for them. The new program is called "LINK" and is the first of its kind in Guam and the CNMI. Customers can select the services they want, starting with an internet plan, and add at least one other service. Customers save by selecting the plans and packages that suit them best.

MARK RABAGO

Docomo Pacific's "LINK" bundles allow customers to select the services they want, starting with an internet plan, and add at least

How does it work?

To get a first look of overall savings with the LINK bundles, we encourage our customers to visit www.docomopacific.com/link and try out the Product Selector. This step-by-step feature allows you to mix-and-match different product options to build your special bundle; while calculating your estimated monthly payment and overall savings.

Building your bundle is done in a few simple steps:

Step #1 – Choose your region

We offer different packages to customers in Guam and CNMI to take into account differences in network capacity and customer needs in each region.

Step #2 – Choose the internet speed that's right for you

Docomo Pacific offers three options for our customers to choose from, with speeds up to 90.0 MBPS.

CNMI customers—30.0 MBPS, 60.0 MBPS, and 90.0 MBPS.

Step #3 – Choose the mobile plan that's right for you

Docomo Pacific offers multiple 4G LTE data plans bundled with our popular ACCESS mobile rate plans which provide endless data on the apps customers use most!

CNMI customers – 40GB, 50GB, and 60GB

In addition, Docomo Pacific customers can finance the latest Samsung Galaxy and Apple iPhones in two affordable ways; installment plans and trade-in. The NOW program enables well-qualified buyers to pay in monthly installments with no upfront costs.

Step #4 – Choose the TV plan that's right for you

We are proud to announce that Docomo Pacific is also launching its own streaming platform app called "dTV+". The dTV+ app can be viewed on an Amazon Fire TV Stick and an Apple TV. This allows you to select live and local content all in HD for less with no monthly equipment fees!

Step #5 – Lastly, add in Home Phone services

Our digital home phone service offers customers endless calls to anywhere in the Marianas.

For more details on pricing, data plans, and offers exclusive to Docomo Pacific customers, please visit www.docomopacific.com or schedule a store visit by visiting the Skiplino app.

About Docomo Pacific

Docomo Pacific is a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT DOCOMO, Japan's leading mobile operator. Headquartered in Tamuning, Guam, DOCOMO PACIFIC is the largest provider of personal, residential, enterprise connectivity and entertainment services in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Named Guam's most reliable network, based on GWS' 2019 OneScore ranking. We are also the 4-time winner of Pika's Best of Guam and 4-time winner of Best of The Pacific. DOCOMO PACIFIC is dedicated to bringing you and your family closer to the things that matter most. Get to know more about what makes us "Better Together" at www.docomopacific.com. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-005
A-2, A-5 AND A-6 SEWER LIFT STATION RENOVATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the renovation of the existing A-2, A-5 and A-6 sewer lift stations, including but not limited to the renovation of the existing generator buildings or the construction of a new generator building, the renovation or relocation of the wet wells with all new pipings, fittings, pumps, generators, and other equipment and appurtenances. The project also includes the installation of a temporary by-pass system and the relocation of existing utilities to accommodate construction activities. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on December 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-005, A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) January 6, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 18, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water & Wastewater, Engineer nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-011
ISLEY BOOSTER II TRANSMISSION AND BOOSTER PUMP UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of upgrading of existing Isley Booster II Pump Station (IB-2); installation of new transmission line to the existing Dandan tank; rehabilitation of existing IB-2 concrete sump tank, yard piping, aboveground flowmeter and valve station with concrete pad, and all other appurtenances at the IB-2 site; construction of a new chlorine and electrical building; installation of new booster pump system (triplex system); construction of new perimeter security fencing and facility lighting; and restoration of existing asphalt concrete road. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 15, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-011, Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 05, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 21, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Nation

Lawmakers act to avert shutdown, buying time for COVID relief talks

WASHINGTON (AP)—Still spinning their wheels on COVID-19 relief, lawmakers grabbed a one-week government funding extension on Wednesday that buys time for more talks—though there is considerable disagreement over who is supposed to be taking the lead from there.

Amid the uncertainty, the House easily passed a one-week government-wide funding bill that sets a new Dec. 18 deadline for Congress to wrap up both the COVID-19 relief measure and a $1.4 trillion catchall spending bill that is also overdue. The 343-67 vote sent the one-week bill to the Senate, where it's expected to easily pass before a deadline of midnight Friday to avert a partial government shutdown.

The measure would give lawmakers more time to sort through the hot mess they have created for themselves after months of futile negotiations and posturing and recent rounds of flip-flopping.

Top GOP leaders said the right people to handle end-game negotiations are the top four leaders of Congress and the Trump administration, focused on a proposal by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to eliminate a Democratic demand for a $160 billion or so aid package for state and local governments.

Top Democrats. meanwhile, are placing their bets on a bipartisan group of senators who are trying to iron out a $908 billion package. The bipartisan group is getting no encouragement from McConnell, but members are claiming progress on perhaps the most contentious item, a demand by the Kentucky Republican to award businesses and other organizations protections against COVID-related lawsuits.

"We're trying to get a bipartisan compromise along the lines of the Gang of Eight framework," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "We need Leader McConnell to stop sabotaging the talks and work with this gang of eight, which is the most hopeful and the only bipartisan group together."

Senate Minority Whip John Thune, R-S.D., however, said the only way to resolve the negotiations is for McConnell, Pelosi and the White House to take charge.

"The bipartisan group provided a good foundation kind of a place to start from. And hopefully, the negotiations are real negotiations on what can ultimately pass the House, the Senate, and get signed," Thune said. "We need to get under way."

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW21-ITB-010

SUBMISSION DATE: December 29, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Route 315 (Quartermaster Road) & Route 33 (Beach Road) Intersection Improvements and Installation of Traffic Signal System, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **November 27, 2020** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 15, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 23, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW/SWMD21-ITB-008

SUBMISSION DATE: December 29, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Groundwater, Leachate and Gas Testing at the Marpi Solid Waste Facility, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE DPW SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION, 2ND FLOOR TRANSFER STATION OFFICE LOWER BASE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 15, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the DPW Solid Waste Management Division, 2nd Floor Transfer Station Office Lower Base, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 22, 2020** to Ms. **Lorraine Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

World

UN chief warns 'vaccine nationalism' is moving at full speed

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Wednesday that "vaccine nationalism" is moving "at full speed," leaving poor people around the globe watching preparations for inoculations against the coronavirus in some rich nations and wondering if and when they will be vaccinated.

The U.N. chief reiterated his call for vaccines to be treated as "a global public good," available to everyone, everywhere on the planet, especially in Africa. And he appealed for $4.2 billion in the next two months for the World Health Organization's COVAX program, an ambitious project to buy and deliver coronavirus vaccines for the world's poorest people.

After a virtual U.N. meeting with the African Union, Guterres said at news conference that financing COVAX is the only way to guarantee vaccines will be available in Africa and other developing areas.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a high-level U.N. General Assembly meeting last week on COVID-19 that "the light at the end of the tunnel is growing steadily brighter" to end the pandemic. But, he added, vaccines "must be shared equally as global public goods, not as private commodities that widen inequalities and become yet another reason some people are left behind."

Tedros said WHO's cash-strapped ACT-Accelerator program to quickly develop and distribute vaccines fairly, which includes the COVAX project, "is in danger of becoming no more than a noble gesture" without major new funding. COVAX will require an additional $23.9 billion for 2021, he said, stressing that the $28 billion total is less than one-half of 1 percent of the $11 trillion in stimulus packages announced so far by the Group of 20, the world's richest countries.

S. Korea sees 686 new cases, 2nd-biggest spike

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea has reported 686 new cases of the coronavirus, tying its second-highest daily jump since the emergence of the pandemic, as a resurgence driven by the greater capital area threatens to erase hard-won gains against the virus.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said Wednesday that 536 of the new cases were reported in the Seoul metropolitan area, where new clusters of infections have been popping up from seemingly everywhere, including restaurants, markets, saunas, hospitals, long-term care facilities and army units.

The country's caseload is now at 39,432, including 556 deaths. The agency said 149 among 8,699 active patients were in serious or critical condition, a group that is being closely monitored amid concerns about a possible shortage in intensive-care beds.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND Floor Arrival Bldg.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that there will be Board Committee Meetings on Friday, December 18, 2020, beginning 9:30 a.m. in the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom at the Airport Fire Station, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan.

AGENDA

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (October 08, 2020)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business: None.**
IV. **New Business:**
1. Supplemental Budget Request: Tinian Airport and Seaport Yutu Repairs
2. Supplemental Budget Request: Tinian Airport Air-Condition Unit Replacement – Yutu Repairs
3. Supplemental budget Request: Port of Saipan Riding Mower
4. Rate Methodology
5. Updated Financial Affairs Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

AIRPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (October 08, 2020)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business:**
1. Solar
2. Mobil
3. Power Plants 2 (Rota) and 3 (Saipan)

IV. **New:**
1. Updated Airport Facilities Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (October 08, 2020)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business:**
1. Hazardous Pay

IV. **New:**
1. Resolution No. 2020-08: Honoring +Jose Charfauros
2. Engineering Assistance
3. Replacement of ARFF Mechanic II (Saipan)
4. Updated Personnel Affairs Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

SEAPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (October 08, 2020)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business:**
1. Tinian Marine Stevedore
2. Saipan Stevedore Lease

IV. **New:**
1. Tinian Shipping
2. Pacific Subsea – Request for Rental Reduction
3. Updated Seaport Facilities Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

Tune in online as we stream live on the Commonwealth Ports Authority's Facebook page. Written testimony on the agenda items must be sent via email before the meeting to cpa.admin@pticom.com. Attendees (in person) must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Barrie C. Toves
Airport Facilities Chair

Ramon A. Tebuteb
Financial Affairs Chair

Pete P. Reyes
Seaport Facilities Chair

Joseph M. Diaz
Personnel Affairs Chair

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND Floor Arrival Bldg.
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Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) hereby gives notice that a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Friday, December 18, 2020, at 2:30 p.m. in the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom at the Airport Fire Station at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes (October 08, 2020)

II. **PUBLIC COMMENT(S)**
III. **CORRESPONDENCES**
IV. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
1. Financial Affairs Committee
2. Airport Facilities Committee
3. Seaport Facilities Committee
4. Personnel Affairs Committee

V. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
VI. **OLD BUSINESS:**
1. Hazardous Pay

VII. **NEW BUSINESS:**
1. Pacific Subsea – Request for Rental Reduction
2. Saipan Stevedore Lease
3. Tinian Shipping
4. Supplemental Budget Request: Tinian Airport and Seaport Yutu Repairs
5. Supplemental Budget Request: Tinian Airport Air-condition Unit Replacement – Yutu Repairs
6. Supplemental Budget Request: Port of Saipan Riding Mower
7. Replacement of ARFF Mechanic II (Saipan)
8. Engineering Assistance

VIII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
- Legal Counsel Reports: Legal matters/Litigation

IX. **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**
X. **ADJOURNMENT**

Tune in online as we stream live on the Commonwealth Ports Authority's Facebook page. Written testimony on the agenda items must be sent via email before the meeting to cpa.admin@pticom.com. Attendees (in person) must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Kimberlyn King-Hinds
Chairwoman, Board of Directors

December 10, 2020

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

DESIGN/BUILD FOR THE SEAPORT MARINA IMPROVEMENTS TINIAN HARBOR CPA PROJECT NO. CPA-TS-001-20

1st AMENDED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting for sealed proposals for the design and construction of improvements to the seaport marina at the Tinian Harbor. The work shall include all design, materials, labor, equipment and construction services necessary to achieve a finished product, including but not limited to the items in the scope of work and those shown on the layout provided in the proposal package.

The Scope of Work (SOW) outlining the project's general requirements may be picked up at the CPA Administration Office at no cost. Project approach and costs must be within the parameters of the established SOW. Any deviation from the SOW, a proposal based on reduced SOW or a proposal that exceeded what is required by the SOW, may be grounds for immediate disqualification of the offeror's proposal package.

A pre-proposal conference will be held on ~~**Friday, November 20, 2020 at 10:00 am**~~ at the CPA Tinian Seaport Office at the Tinian Harbor to discuss the project scope of work in detail. A site inspection will immediately follow the pre-proposal conference. Attendance at this conference is not mandatory.

Questions shall be submitted in writing to Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager via hand delivery to the CPA Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport, or via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, December 11, 2020. All responses to questions or requests for information will be provided to all proposers who have picked up a proposal package.

Proposers are requested to submit one original and four (4) copies of the proposals, sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: *"Design/Build for Seaport Marina Improvement, Tinian Harbor, Tinian, CPA-TS-001-20"*. Proposals must be submitted no later than **5:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2020**, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: December 1, 2020

VEHICLE FOR SALE

2014 TOYOTA TACOMA PICKUP TRUCK REGULAR – WHITE COLOR

For more information, please contact Bank of Guam through its counsel, Robert T. Torres at Telephone Numbers (670) 234-7859 - (670) 234-5750.

Bids will be closed on
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020 AT 5:00PM

The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all offers
The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties – Minimum bid is $4,000.00
Inspection and a vehicle bid form can be obtained from Bank of Guam counsel's office at:

ROBERT TENORIO TORRES
Attorney at Law
Chalan Kiya
P.O. Box 503758 CK, Saipan, MP 96950

Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Chamorro-English, Carolinian-English Translation Services

Interested parties can access more details for this RFP at www.nmhcouncil.org.

Submission Deadline: December 14, 2020

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW/SWMD21-RFP-009

SUBMISSION DATE: December 29, 2020 TIME: 9:30 A.M.

"Scope of Services for Cost and Creation and Implementation of a Household Hazardous Waste Management Plan (HHWMP) Collected at the Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE DPW SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION, 2ND FLOOR TRANSFER STATION OFFICE LOWER BASE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 15, 2020**, 10:00 a.m. local time at the DPW Solid Waste Management Division, 2nd Floor Transfer Station Office Lower Base, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 22, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Off The Wall

Fauci, Kamala among famous names on mispronounced words list

Fauci, Kamala….da Vinci?

America's preeminent infectious disease expert, Anthony Fauci, and its incoming vice president, Kamala Harris, join the Renaissance master himself, Leonardo da Vinci, atop this year's list of most mispronounced words, as compiled by the U.S. Captioning Company, which captions and subtitles real-time events on TV and in courtrooms.

The list released Wednesday identifies the words that proved most challenging for newsreaders and people on television to pronounce this year.

The caption company said it surveyed its members to generate the list, which is now in its fifth year and was commissioned by Babbel, a language-learning app company with headquarters in Berlin and New York.

Todd Ehresmann, a senior linguist at Babbel, said the list, unsurprisingly, reflects a year dominated by presidential politics and the coronavirus pandemic.

"All of these have added some new phrases to our national vocabulary, which may take some practice," he said.

Here's how Ehresmann broke down the proper pronunciations for the commonly misspoken words:

Anthony Fauci (AN-thon-nee FOW-chee): Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Bangtan Sonyeondan (PUNG-tahn SOH-nyun-dahn): The full name of South Korean K-Pop band 'BTS', which translates as "a group of bulletproof boys" or "bulletproof boy scouts."

Giannis Antetokounmpo (YON-nis AHN-de-doh-KOON-boh): Greek basketball player who plays for the Milwaukee Bucks and was named the NBA's 'Most Valuable Player' this year.

This combo of 2020 file photos shows Dr. Anotny Fauci, left, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health, and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, right. AP

Isaias (ees-ah-EE-ahs): The name given to a powerful hurricane that caused significant damage to the East Coast and Caribbean this summer.

Kamala Harris: The Vice President-Elect. The Associated Press has reported Harris' first name is pronounced "KAH'-mah-lah"—or, as she explains in her biography, "'comma-la,' like the punctuation mark."

Leonardo da Vinci (lee-oh-NAR-doe dah-VIN-chee): The Italian painter, architect, and engineer who created the 'Mona Lisa.' A mispronunciation of his name was the subject of a viral meme on social media this year. ***(AP)***

92-year-old man finds college jacket with social media help

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (AP)—More than 60 years after Mal Osborn earned a varsity letter jacket from the University of Maine as a track runner, he still wore it. That is, until the 92-year-old lost it in October.

Osborn, who has lived in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, since 1964, told his daughter Beverly Amick that he couldn't find the treasured jacket, the Bangor Daily News reported on Monday. Amick and other relatives retraced Osborn's usual routes on the assumption that he'd placed the jacket on his car and it had fallen off while he was driving.

When they failed to find it, Amick posted a photo of Osborn on Facebook wearing the jacket at a Master's swimming competition in 2016 and asked for help finding it.

"This man would be ecstatic if this well loved (sic) jacket was found," she wrote in the post that was shared more than 1,000 times.

Osborn ran long-distance track and cross-country events from 1949-52 at the University of Maine, the Bangor Daily News reported. He told the newspaper the letter jacket had become a part of him after so many years.

"I just know how much it meant to him," Amick told The Associated Press. "I was going to do everything in my power to find it."

Amick said she got an email from a woman who lived near her father and had found the coat in her yard, covered with leaves.

Osborn has been sporting the jacket since Amick had it dry-cleaned and returned it to him, she said.

"As challenging as this year has been, this has given us some hope," she said.

It was especially poignant given the difficult year everyone has experienced.

New phallus sculpture appears in Bavarian mountains

BERLIN (AP)—Just days after a large phallus sculpture mysteriously disappeared from a Bavarian mountainside, a similar wooden carving has appeared in its place, German news agency dpa reported Thursday.

The saga began several years ago, when a 2-meter-tall (almost 7-foot) tall sculpture appeared on the 1,738-meter (5,702-foot) high Gruenten mountain in southern Germany.

It quickly became a selfie magnet for hikers and even featured on Google Maps, where it was described as a "cultural monument."

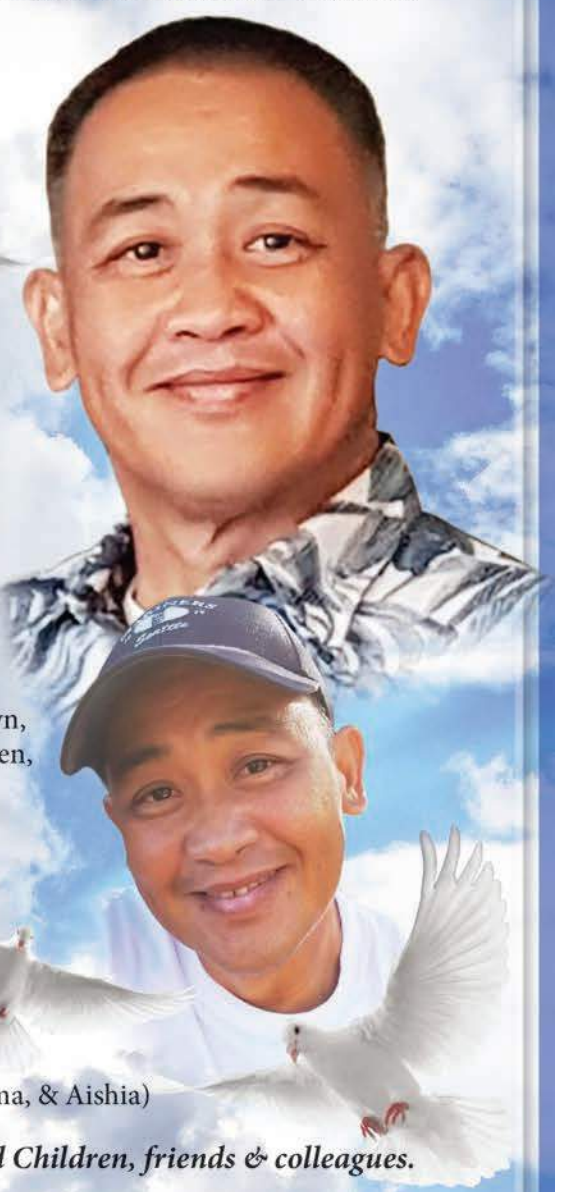
The sculpture toppled over several weeks ago, only to be erected again. Last weekend it vanished entirely, with only a pile of sawdust left behind.

Even as local police probe the disappearance, the tale took a further twist Thursday with the discovery that a new, slightly larger carving of male genitalia had appeared at the site, propped up with wooden beams.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

†Ray Anthony Sablan Masga

Born on October 07, 1969 and Called to Eternal Life on December 07, 2020



In his New Life he now joins:

Father: †Francisco Acosta Masga

Maternal Grandparents: †Jesus Aguon Sablan, †Estefania Reyes Sablan

Paternal Grandparents: †Jose Hocog Masga, †Maria Acosta Masga

Nephew: †Raymond Franklin Masga Nakazato

Grand Niece: †Angel Mahealani Nakazato Borja

His memory will forever live in the hearts of his:

Mother: Nicolasa Sablan Masga

Son: Franco Ray Jr. Tudela Masga

First Wife: Christine Loretta Tudela

Siblings:

Leona M./ Takehide Nakazato (Courtney, Koniko/Jomalyn, Mayumi/Jowel & Children, Francine/Nikkie & Children, Mariama/Marwin & Child)

Junnie M./ Berry Fredrick (Tiffany/Jeffrey & Children, Tamara/Ray & Children, Tesha & Child, Jodeen/Joey & Francisco)

Andrew Sablan Masga

Shawn / Helen Masga (Shalane & Shane)

Caroline M. / Brandon Agulto

Franica Sablan Masga

Special Friend: Judith F. Santos (Glenn/Catherine, Maxima, & Aishia)

He will be missed by numerous family members, God Children, friends & colleagues.

Daily mass is being offered at 6AM at our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral also at Santa Soledad & St. Jude Parish at 6PM.

On Tuesday, December 15, 2020 our beloved †**Ray** will be escorted from Borja Funeral Home to Mount Carmel Catherdral at 8:45AM. Responso services and recitation of the Holy Rosary will follow at 9AM. Public viewing will be offered from 9:30AM to 10:30AM. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11AM followed by interment services, where he will be laid to rest in peace and love at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase and Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.

Franco Ray Jr. Tudela Masga and Family

Science & Technology

China spacecraft lands on moon to bring rocks back to Earth

BEIJING (AP)—A Chinese spacecraft sent to return lunar rocks to Earth collected its first samples Wednesday after landing on the moon, the government announced, adding to a string of successes for Beijing's increasingly ambitious space program.

The Chang'e 5 probe touched down shortly after 11 p.m. (1500 GMT) on Tuesday after descending from an orbiter, the China National Space Administration said. It released images of the barren scene at the landing site showing the lander's shadow.

"Chang'e has collected moon samples," the agency said in a statement carried by the official Xinhua News Agency. It said the probe also had successfully unfolded solar panels that will power it.

The probe, launched Nov. 24 from the tropical southern island of Hainan, is the latest venture by a Chinese space program that sent its first astronaut into orbit in 2003, has a spacecraft en route to Mars and aims eventually to land a human on the moon.

Plans call for the lander to spend about two days drilling into the lunar surface and collecting 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of rocks and debris. The top stage of the probe will be launched back into lunar orbit to transfer the samples to a capsule for return to Earth, where it is to land in China's northern grasslands in mid-December.

If it succeeds, it will be the first time scientists have obtained fresh samples of lunar rocks since a Soviet probe in the 1970s. Those samples are expected to be made available to scientists from other nations, although its unclear how much access NASA will have, given tight U.S. government restrictions on space cooperation with China.

First woman, next man on moon will come from these NASA 18

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—NASA has named the 18 astronauts—half of them women—who will train for its Artemis moon-landing program.

The first woman and next man on the moon will come from this elite group.

Vice President Mike Pence introduced the astronauts Wednesday at the close of his final meeting as chairman of the National Space Council. The announcement was made at Florida's Kennedy Space Center, beneath one of only three remaining Saturn V moon rockets from the 1960s and 1970s Apollo program.

Pence noted that the last of the 12 men to walk on the moon, the late Apollo 17 commander Gene Cernan, wanted nothing more than to remove "last" from his title. Cernan's final lunar footsteps were on Dec. 14, 1972.

"He spent the rest of his natural life advocating for America to go back to the moon, and we are going to honor Gene Cernan's memory," Pence told the small crowd, seated several feet apart from one another.

Five of the astronauts that will be part of the Artemis missions, from left, Jessica Meir, Joe Acaba, Anne McClain, Matthew Dominick, and Jessica Watkins are introduced by Vice President Mike Pence during the eighth meeting of the National Space Council at the Kennedy Space Center Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020, in Cape Canaveral , Fla. AP

Five of the astronauts—the only ones in attendance—walked onto the stage, waving and wearing masks.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine stressed there would be more astronauts joining the group. NASA has 47 active astronauts.

The space agency is aiming for a moon landing by 2024, although the chances of that happening are growing increasingly dim. The upcoming change in administration also adds uncertainty.

Half of the NASA astronauts have spaceflight experience. Two are at the International Space Station right now: Kate Rubins and Victor Glover.

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

Margarita Sablan Camacho

Fondly known as "Adig/ Auntie Adig"

FEBRUARY 03, 1935 - NOVEMBER 09, 2020

Words cannot adequately express our profound gratitude and sincere appreciation to all our family and friends for all the kind words of comfort and for taking the time to join us in Celebration of our beloved Margarita Sablan Camacho's new life. Your prayers, love, support and condolences have helped us tremendously during this most difficult time, giving us courage and strength to accept the will of God no matter how painful and difficult. Know that you are treasured in our hearts and will be remembered in our thoughts and prayers.

We want to express our grateful appreciation to the staff and management of CHCC, the doctors and nurses for all their compassion and untiring care of our beloved Margarita S. Camacho.

Special thanks go out to Fr. Jesse Reyes, Borja Funeral Home, Herman's Bakery, and Chelu Photography.

May our beloved "Aunite Adig" find solace and peace in the arms of our Savior and rejoice in her new life.

Thank you yan Un Dangkulu
na Si Yu'us Ma'ase

The Family

Science Matters

The chemistry of tequila's piercing flavor

A set of organic chemicals is responsible for the distinctive flavor of tequila, and the toxic alcohol methanol gives tequila its tang.

Tequila is a distilled liquor *made from the sugary sap of agave, a Mexican desert plant*

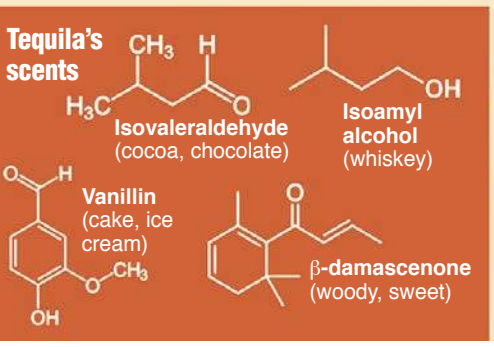
Agave's core *is cut down into a "pineapple" shape, then roasted, ground and distilled*

Tequila sunrise is one of the many cocktails made from tequila and citrus

Methanol, or wood alcohol, separates cheap, rough-tasting tequila from high-quality versions. Too little makes tequila taste bad; too much makes it toxic. Methanol also causes an unpleasant tequila hangover.

The "worms" *in tequila bottles are not worms but larvae of a moth (white) or beetle (red)*

Tequila's scents



Isovaleraldehyde (cocoa, chocolate)

Isoamyl alcohol (whiskey)

Vanillin (cake, ice cream)

β-damascenone (woody, sweet)

Source: American Chemical Society; Scot Benn and Terry Peppard in the Journal of Agricultural Food Chemistry, 1996:44; USA Today (worms)
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Life & Style

Ang Lee on 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' 20 years later

AP

This photo released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Chow Yun Fat, left, and Michelle Yeoh in a scene from "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

NEW YORK (AP)—It's physically impossible to get to the forest fight scene that hovers atop slender bamboo trees in "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and not say out loud "Whoa."

Twenty years later, the exhilarating grace of Ang Lee's martial-arts masterwork is just as breathtaking. The way figures glide across the water. The extraordinary lightness of it. Its craft and choreography are only further evidence of a mantra uttered in the film: "A sword by itself rules nothing. It only comes alive in skilled hands."

Take that scene, where Chow Yun-fat and Zhang Ziyi clash in a dance across bamboo stalks. Asked what he remembers about shooting it, Lee doesn't hesitate: The sweating. Not from heat but from the stress of suspending a few of Asia's biggest movie stars high in the air, held aloft by cranes over a valley.

"You use very heavy ways to imitate lightness," said Lee, speaking by phone from Taiwan during a recent trip from his home in New York. "Each actor hanging up there, you need 30 people down on the ground mimicking how the bamboo swings in the wind. I probably did about a third of what I wanted to do. The way you dream about a movie, it's very difficult to make real."

Tuesday marked the 20th anniversary of the release of "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon," an occasion being celebrated with a new limited-edition 4K UHD Blu-ray. It remains a movie unlike any other. An international co-production filmed in China and shot in Mandarin, it still ranks, easily, as the most successful non-English language film ever in the U.S. The $17-million movie grossed $128.1 million in North America.

Arguably more than any other film, "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon" opened mainstream American moviegoers not just to a new genre known predominantly in Asia —the wuxia tradition—but to subtitled films in general. It set another record with 10 Academy Awards nominations, a mark since equaled by "Roma" and "Parasite." "Crouching Tiger" took home four Oscars.

Did Lee feel that when Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" became the first non-English language best-picture winner in February that he had helped pave the way?

"Yeah, I did," says Lee, laughing. "I wouldn't say it happened because of me. But as people paved the way for me, I paved the way for that movie. And that movie paved the way for future moviemakers and goers. We're a community. We're all part of a history."

"Crouching Tiger" is poised between worlds. Its elegantly choreographed action scenes have the meter of poetry. Its conflicts between duty and freedom, master and disciple take on soulful dimensions—particularly in scenes with the film's antagonist: the rebellious Jen Yu (Zhang), a commanding figure of feminist fury and empowerment who at the time drew comparisons to Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Twenty years later, she still feels like a brilliant outlier in a male-dominated genre.

Women's Hall of Fame honors Aretha Franklin, Morrison, Lacks

SENECA FALLS, N.Y. (AP)—"Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin and Nobel laureate and "Beloved" author Toni Morrison will be inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame Thursday as part of a posthumous class of Black honorees that also includes Henrietta Lacks, whose cells were widely used in biomedical research; Barbara Hillary, the first Black woman to travel to both the North and South Poles, and civil rights activists Barbara Rose Johns Powell and Mary Church Terrell.

The evening ceremony will be the first in a series of planned virtual inductions meant to correct a lack of diversity among honorees, hall officials said in a news release.

"In order to openly acknowledge and amend the disparities within the nomination pool, the virtual induction series will recognize and induct other marginalized women of achievement including those from the Latinx, Asian, Native American, LGBTQ+ sisterhoods, as well as additional Black women," it said.

The National Women's Hall of Fame was founded in 1969 in Seneca Falls, the site of the first women's rights convention.

Franklin had dozens of hits over a half-century and her signature song, "Respect," has stood as a cultural icon. She won 18 Grammy awards and, in 1987, became the first woman inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Franklin died of pancreatic cancer at her home in Detroit in 2018. She was 76.

Morrison helped raise American multiculturalism to the world stage. She was nearly 40 when her first novel, "The Bluest Eye," was published. After just six novels, Morrison in 1993 became the first Black woman to receive the Nobel literature prize, earning praise from the Swedish academy for her "visionary force."

In 2012, President Barack Obama awarded Morrison a Presidential Medal of Freedom. She was 88 years old when she died last year.

The case of Henrietta Lacks was the subject of a bestselling 2010 book and a 2017 HBO film. It began when researchers took a sample of cancer cells without her permission while she was under anesthesia and found they could be grown indefinitely.

The so-called "HeLa" cells became crucial for understanding viruses, cancer treatments, in vitro fertilization and development of vaccines, including the polio vaccine. She died in 1951 at just 31.

The adventurer Hillary became fascinated with travel after retiring from a nursing career. She was 75 years old when she became the first Black woman to set foot on the North Pole, and stood on the South Pole five years later. She died at 88 in 2019.

Johns Powell was 16 years old in 1951, when she led a student strike for equal education at R.R. Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia. The students' cause gained the support of NAACP lawyers, who filed a lawsuit that would become one of the five cases that the U.S. Supreme Court reviewed in Brown v. Board of Education. The high court's landmark 1954 decision declared "separate but equal" public schools unconstitutional.

Johns Powell died at 56 in 1991.

Born during the Civil War, Terrell was a dedicated suffragist whose civil rights activism continued up until her death in 1954 at the age of 90.

Daughter clashes with dad over his teenage girlfriend

DEAR ABBY: I'm really uncomfortable about my father's new relationship. He is 50 and dating a girl who is 19—only two years older than I am. She went to my high school.

I think their age difference is disgusting. He knows how I feel about it, and he doesn't care. We fought, and I told him I wouldn't talk to him anymore. I would rather live with my mom full time than spend half my time at his house.

I haven't seen or spoken to him in more than a month, and I am hurt that he would choose his girlfriend over me. My father and I were never super close, but we had a decent relationship. I looked up to him.

Without him in my life I feel like something is missing. I have tried to get over how I feel and force myself to accept the situation regardless of how uncomfortable it makes me feel, but I just can't! I have lost respect for him. I feel like he is a pervert.

How can I take his parental advice seriously or listen when he tries to discipline me when he is dating someone my age? It makes me wonder if he treats his girlfriend like his daughter and tries to parent her, too—which is just creepy. What can I do to feel better?

HATES DAD'S TEEN ROMANCE

DEAR HATES: I would love to know how that girl's parents feel about this love match. Your father may be flattered that someone so young would have a romantic interest in him. Being with her may make him forget that he's 31 years older —past middle age—and think he's a cool young dude again.

When there is that great an age difference, the older person is usually the one calling the shots, and the balance of power in the relationship is unequal. If your father is parenting her, it may be because she needs a "daddy" and it makes him feel important.

You'll start feeling better as soon as you accept that you can't control what your father does and realize that his relationship with your contemporary may not last. In the meantime, focus on your studies.

DEAR ABBY: The world seems bleak to many of us who are self-quarantined. I ordered quarts of ice cream from a local ice cream company, picked them up at the store with coolers and ice packs in my car and delivered them to the front doors of several friends. As I was driving away, I called and told them to check their porch. They were all surprised and pleased to have a little pick-me-up for their day.

Last night, one of these friends dropped off cinnamon rolls. She knocked and left. She wanted them to be at our house for breakfast today. Neither of these were big, expensive items, but they brought a smile when there isn't much to smile about these days.

PAY IT FORWARD IN THE SOUTH

DEAR PAY IT: Comfort food comes in many forms—ice cream, baked goods of every variety, chocolate. And it's all the more tasty when shared among friends as you have described. All of these quick fixes work, at least for a little while. I am now trying to repent from my torrid affair with pralines 'n' cream ice cream.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

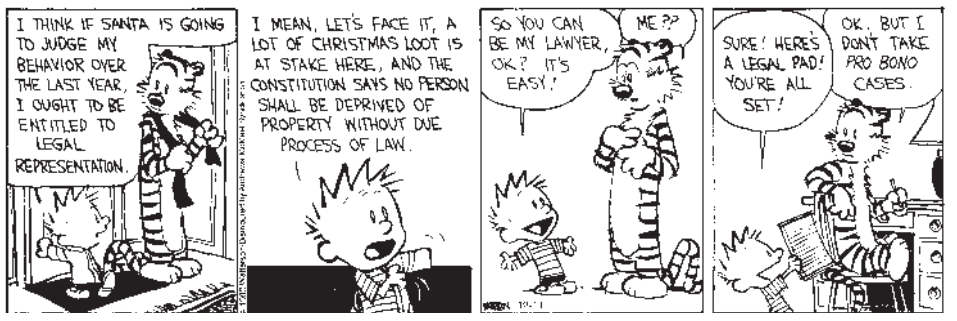
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I THINK IF SANTA IS GOING TO JUDGE MY BEHAVIOR OVER THE LAST YEAR, I OUGHT TO BE ENTITLED TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION.
I MEAN, LET'S FACE IT, A LOT OF CHRISTMAS LOOT IS AT STAKE HERE, AND THE CONSTITUTION SAYS NO PERSON SHALL BE DEPRIVED OF PROPERTY WITHOUT DUE PROCESS OF LAW.
SO YOU CAN BE MY LAWYER, OK? IT'S EASY!
ME??
SURE! HERE'S A LEGAL PAD! YOU'RE ALL SET!
OK. BUT I DON'T TAKE PRO BONO CASES.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I GOT YOU SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS
NOT THAT I'M EXPECTING ANYTHING SPECIAL...
BETTER RETURN THE CHEESE LOG
JIM DAVIS 12-11

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

ADAM, LET'S JUST MAKE OUR OWN COOKIE PLATE.
YEAH?
WE'LL MAKE ALL THE COOKIES THE GARRETTS NORMALLY DROP OFF.
THAT WOULD BE KIND OF...
THESE COOKIES WERE ON THE FRONT PORCH.
SWEET FLIPPIN' SUGARPLUMS. CHRISTMAS IS SAVED!
12-11

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HOW GOES IT?
AUGGH!! I CAN'T GET THIS STRAND OF LIGHTS UNTANGLED!!
WHY GET SO WORKED UP OVER IT? JUST HANG THAT STRAND AS IT IS.
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT WOULD EASE MY NERVES. HAND ME THE EXTENSION CORD.
HERE Y'GO.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Little lie
4 Shell game item
7 Fragrant trees
12 "Exodus" hero
13 Flight stat
14 Tends texts
15 — Tin Tin
16 Daily delivery, at times
18 Flavor enhancer, for short
19 Painting of a scene
20 "Scram!"
22 Capote nickname
23 Dutch cheese
27 "For — a jolly good ..."
29 Hopper of Hollywood
31 Coffee add-in
34 Long
35 Little angel
37 Part of MPH
38 Pepsi rival
39 "— Town"
41 Last writes?
45 Tennis star Becker
47 Single
48 Bookstore buy
52 Capitol Hill VIP
53 Baseball's Tony
54 Island garland
55 Madrid Mrs.
56 Summoned with a beeper
57 Pink Floyd's Barrett
58 $ dispenser

DOWN

1 Rural spreads
2 From Dublin
3 "That's it!"
4 Skillets
5 Votes for
6 Fighting
7 Muppet prawn
8 Actress Lupino
9 Wee bite
10 Summer on the Seine
11 Old map letters
17 Tater
21 Chicago airport
23 January, to Juana
24 Genetic stuff
25 Tire filler
26 AOL rival
28 Ostrich's kin
30 Storm center
31 300, to Cato
32 Plato's P
33 Comics cry
36 Nitwit
37 Expensive
40 Russian range
42 — nova
43 Not moving
44 Coffee break hr.
45 Pitt of "Troy"
46 Lose traction
48 Mom's mate
49 In the style of
50 Pot-bellied pet
51 First lady?

Solution time: 25 mins.

P	A	C		C	I	T	E		S	P	A	M
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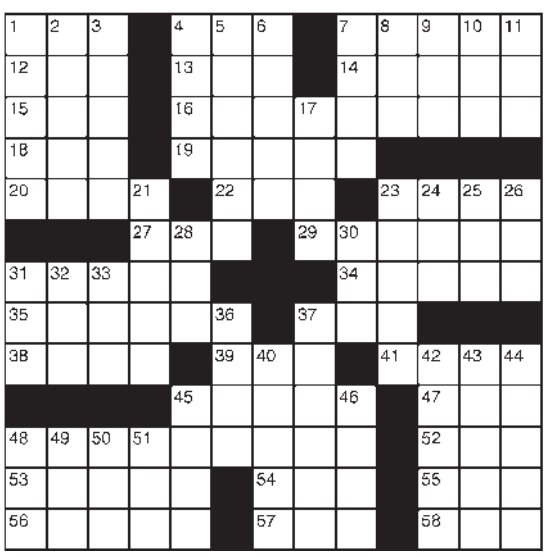
S	S	N	S		W	E	A	H		N	B	A

Yesterday's answer 12-11



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mo'Nique, 53; Gary Dourdan, 54; Jermaine Jackson, 66; Bess Armstrong, 67.

Happy Birthday: Keep an open mind this year, but don't be too eager to share sensitive information. Protect your rights, beliefs and reputation. Take nothing for granted, and do for yourself. Be aggressive in your pursuits, but not when dealing with opposition. Distance yourself from negativity, and stay focused on what will bring you the highest return. Your numbers are 5, 16, 19, 28, 33, 41, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Stop worrying about what others think, and do what's best for you. A lifestyle change will boost your morale and prompt you to pursue knowledge and skills that are engaging and will help you reach your long-term goals. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Spend time with people who share your interests and goals. Whether it's through a virtual connection or someone you share space with, the outcome will ease stress and encourage you to make positive changes together. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Be careful who you trust. The information or help offered will not turn out well. Clarify what you need and want before you include others in your plans. Be resourceful, and rely on your ability to get things done by yourself. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Let your imagination lead the way. Try something new and exciting, and you will be happy you did. A show of affection will encourage a positive change in a meaningful relationship. An unusual offer will be a steppingstone to advance. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Rely on intelligence. If you let your emotions take over, you will find it challenging to deal with what others do or say. Stay on track, and concentrate on what others expect of you. Take care of responsibilities, and move on to pleasurable pursuits. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Pay close attention to the way you treat others. A change you make will lead to personal growth as well as compliments. Tie up loose ends, and put the past behind you. Don't get into a dispute; just walk away. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Verify information, and use your intelligence to deter someone from putting demands on you or your time. Be bold, say what's on your mind and align yourself with people who have something valuable to offer in return. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Your mind will wander, making it difficult for you to focus on one thing. Take care of emotional matters, and it will help you get back on track. A change may not be welcome, but it will be necessary to fulfill an obligation. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Tunnel vision will help you reach your objective. Refuse to let anyone interrupt what you are trying to accomplish or entice you with something that sounds exciting but risky. Control your emotions, and maintain honesty and integrity. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Trust your judgment, and do what's right. Be a good listener, and you will gain insight into what others want. A positive change at home will bring you closer to someone you love and set the stage for a brighter future. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep your emotions in check, and put your effort into something concrete. A dynamic approach to what you do will help you improve your skills, knowledge and ability to advance. Don't waste time on something you cannot change. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Personal improvement will make you feel good about who you are and what you have to offer. Address uncertainty that is building with time. It's best to find out where you stand if you want to ease stress. Make a romantic gesture. ✪✪✪✪

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8				1		3		
2	9			8				
	4					1		
	6				3			
1								2
			5			9		
		8				1		
				7		8	9	
	5			6				7

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	4	6	1	2	3	9	8	5
2	5	1	9	7	8	6	3	4
9	3	8	4	6	5	2	1	7
4	8	7	5	3	2	1	6	9
1	6	3	7	9	4	5	2	8
5	9	2	8	1	6	7	4	3
3	1	9	6	8	7	4	5	2
8	7	5	2	4	1	3	9	6
6	2	4	3	5	9	8	7	1

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

PRESS CONFERENCES Solution: 9 letters

W	M	E	Y	T	P	I	R	C	S	N	A	R	T	E
E	R	T	B	T	T	P	K	S	E	D	U	S	N	M
L	I	I	M	L	I	F	L	T	R	P	D	M	E	I
O	F	V	T	I	M	N	W	A	D	R	I	A	V	R
R	N	N	E	E	E	O	U	A	Y	F	O	E	E	C
E	O	I	S	M	R	E	T	M	S	E	C	T	C	E
C	I	I	S	K	K	E	B	R	M	A	R	A	C	G
O	T	S	S	S	N	R	E	S	M	O	M	S	I	A
G	A	T	A	G	A	P	E	P	P	E	C	F	S	T
N	L	I	M	N	A	H	A	E	R	S	T	R	E	S
I	S	U	D	P	C	I	R	A	D	I	O	O	H	T
T	I	S	S	N	G	T	E	K	R	A	M	Y	C	R
I	G	W	U	N	S	E	T	E	L	H	T	A	A	O
O	E	A	P	P	E	A	L	R	E	C	I	L	O	P
N	L	L	I	E	V	N	U	S	I	D	E	S	C	S

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Giannis not focusing on signing supermax deal

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo praised the "amazing" moves the Milwaukee Bucks have made to improve the team, but the two-time reigning MVP stopped short Wednesday of saying he would sign a supermax contract extension offer.

"Right now I'm not focusing on that," Antetokounmpo said during his first preseason discussion with reporters. "I know my agent, Alex (Saratsis), and (general manager) Jon Horst and the Bucks ownership are focusing on those discussions. I'm just trying to focus on myself and how I can get better, how I can help my teammates be better, how I can be ready Saturday to play our first preseason game."

Antetokounmpo, who turned 26 last week, would be able to receive up to 35% of the salary cap with an 8% escalation each year of the deal under a supermax extension. The Bucks were able to offer a five-year deal worth over $220 million.

He has until Dec. 21 to sign the extension, or else he will be eligible to become a free agent after the 2020-21 season. Antetokounmpo said he is letting his agent handle any contract discussions.

"I'm not going to lie to you," Antetokounmpo said. "I'm not the type of player who talks with his agent five times a week or seven times a week."

The Bucks spent the offseason trying to upgrade their roster, with mixed success, after they posted the NBA's best regular-season record in each of the last two years only to fall short in the playoffs.

The Bucks acquired veteran guard Jrue Holiday as part of a four-team trade in which they gave up guards Eric Bledsoe and George Hill and a package of picks. But a widely reported sign-and-trade with Sacramento that would have brought sharpshooting swingman Bogdan Bogdanovic to Milwaukee fell through as the NBA investigated whether the teams reached an agreement earlier than allowed by league rules.

Milwaukee followed that up by re-signing guard Pat Connaughton and agreeing to terms with free-agent guards D.J. Augustin and Bryn Forbes and forwards Torrey Craig and Bobby Portis.

"I think their moves have been amazing," Antetokounmpo said. "All the guys we got, they can help the team, they can defend. Having Holiday on the team is big time. He's a great leader. He's a great human being. He can defend. He can score the ball. He's going to bring that edge that we need. The rest of the guys, I think they're going to help us, too."

AP

In this Jan. 31, 2020 file photo, Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo dunks against the Denver Nuggets during the second half of an NBA game in Milwaukee.

The Bucks lost to the Miami Heat in the second round of the playoffs last season after blowing a 2-0 lead to Toronto in the 2019 Eastern Conference finals. The Bucks struggled to adapt to the Walt Disney World bubble and never regained the form they showed before the pandemic-imposed hiatus.

"Last year, we weren't ourselves," Antetokounmpo said. "What we showed in the bubble wasn't ourselves and wasn't even close to what we can do. Going into this season, our focus is obviously the championship, but before that we've got to get better as a unit. We've got to create good habits. We've got to be the toughest, the nastiest, the team that plays together."

He added that he doesn't believe "it's a championship-or-bust situation."

"I want to win a championship. Nobody wants to win a championship more than me," he said. "But there's steps to that. You've got to keep improving. You've got to keep getting better. Hopefully we can get that this year."

Milwaukee is chasing its first NBA title since Kareem Abdul-Jabbar led the Bucks to the championship in 1971. Abdul-Jabbar demanded a trade and was dealt to the Los Angeles Lakers in 1975. Now the Bucks are trying to make sure their biggest star since Abdul-Jabbar also doesn't leave town.

The Bucks say the uncertainty surrounding Antetokounmpo's future hasn't impacted the team's focus as it gets ready for the season.

"It's obviously a big thing for the team, a big thing for him, and we want him to make the right decision, what's best for him," center Brook Lopez said. "But I think we're all professionals obviously and we all just come in and work."

Teammates have responded to the situation by showing their sense of humor. When Antetokounmpo celebrated his 26th birthday on Sunday, each of the Bucks gave him a pen as a gift. All-Star forward Khris Middleton said at the time that "hopefully he enjoys it and uses it."

"At first, I didn't get it," Antetokounmpo said. "Khris came in and gave me a pen and I was like 'What is this?' But after thinking about it, I realized it was for me to sign the contract. I laughed the first time, I laughed the second time and then I got like 20 pens so it got a little bit old. But I've got 20 pens sitting in my locker."

Harden wants Tyron Lue over Silas

Rockets star James Harden still hasn't publicly explained his trade request.

But it appears Houston's coaching search was a tipping point.

Tyronn Lue was linked to the Rockets before getting hired by the Clippers. At one point, Jeff Van Gundy appeared to be the favorite. Then, it appeared Rockets assistant John Lucas— reportedly preferred by Harden at that point—might be the favorite.

Ultimately, Houston hired Stephen Silas.

Apparently, Harden didn't see Silas as an acceptable compromise. Nor did Houston retaining Lucas as an assistant placate Harden.

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Ronaldo outshines Messi in Champions League

AP
Cristiano Ronaldo, left, of Juventus FC is defended by Lionel Messi of FC Barcelona during the UEFA Champions League Group G football match at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020.

SPAIN—Fans around the world may have had to wait for the sixth and final match day of the 2020-21 UEFA Champions League group stage, but finally neutrals everywhere got their wish: Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo—the greatest two players of their generation and perhaps of all time—squaring off on the same field for the first time in more than two years.

The potential matchup between the two living legends has been eagerly anticipated since the first round draw took place in October. But when Messi's Barcelona traveled to Italy to take on Juventus later that month, Ronaldo was forced to miss the match after contracting COVID-19 while on international duty with Portugal. Juve missed its star man, too, as Barca ran out 2-0 winners in Turin.

But the visitors returned the favor in Tuesday's rematch, with Ronaldo scoring twice in a convincing 3-0 win that vaulted Juventus over Barcelona to clinch the top spot in Group G. The hosts advanced as runner-up.

Meetings between Messi and Ronaldo used to be commonplace when both men played in Spain from 2009-2018. The two icons' clubs faced off twice annually in La Liga for each of those nine seasons, and they also met frequently in high-stakes Spanish cup games.

But when Ronaldo departed Real Madrid after nearly a decade to join the Serie A titans in the middle of the 2018 World Cup, it left the Champions League, Europe's top club competition, as the only stage able to showcase the pair against each other. Still, there was no guarantee the meeting would happen in the lead-up to this week's marquee clash at Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium.

With both teams all but already qualified for the knockout stage, Barca coach Ronald Koeman and his Juve counterpart, Andrea Pirlo, could have chosen to save the 30-something pair for more meaningful games. Both teams have ground to make up in their own domestic leagues; Juventus, which has won the last nine Italian titles, sits fourth in the race for the Scudetto, while Barcelona is languishing in ninth place in the Spanish top-flight following last weekend's shocking loss to Cadiz.Yet both managers opted to give the masses what they wanted by including the superstars in their respective starting lineups.

Once the action got underway, Ronaldo promptly sent the visitors on their way to victory, drawing a penalty that he converted himself just 12 minutes into the contest.

Besides the high-profile Messi-Ronaldo matchup, the game also featured a delicious one for fans of the United States men's national team. USMNT midfielder Weston McKennie, who signed for Juve in September, also got the start, as did Barca fullback Sergino Dest, the Dutch-raised American enjoying an impressive maiden season with Messi's side.

On a day when everything went right for Juve, McKennie doubled the Italians' lead with a spectacular leaping scissors kick off a pass from Juan Cuadrado. It was the Texan's first goal for the club since joining from Germany's Schalke:

Ronaldo sealed the points for his team with another spot-kick that made it 3-0 early in the second half. Messi, meantime, had a frustrating evening; the Argentinian's best effort came afterward off a looping header that caromed harmlessly off the top of Gianluigi Buffon's crossbar.

Messi, 33, has four career European titles, all with Barca. The 35-year-old Ronaldo has five: four with Real, and one during his days with Manchester United. Juve last won the Champions League way back in 1996. ***(AP/NBC)***

Freeman among trio of Braves on All-MLB first team

NEW YORK (AP)—National League MVP Freddie Freeman was one of three Atlanta Braves selected to the All-MLB first team on Wednesday night.

The slugging first baseman was joined by Braves designated hitter Marcell Ozuna and starting pitcher Max Fried. Atlanta outfielder Ronald Acuña Jr. was chosen for the second team, giving the NL East champions more honorees than any other club following a 2020 season reduced to 60 games because of the coronavirus pandemic.

San Diego had two players on the top team: shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. and third baseman Manny Machado.

Cy Young Award winners Trevor Bauer of the Cincinnati Reds and Shane Bieber of the Cleveland Indians also made the first team. Chicago Cubs righthander Yu Darvish and New York Mets ace Jacob deGrom rounded out the five starters.

The rest of the first team featured Kansas City catcher Salvador Perez, New York Yankees second baseman DJ LeMahieu, and outfielders Mookie Betts from the World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers, Mike Trout of the Los Angeles Angels and Juan Soto of the Washington Nationals. The relievers were Tampa Bay's Nick Anderson and Oakland's Liam Hendriks.

AL MVP José Abreu of the Chicago White Sox was the first baseman on the second team, which also included Philadelphia catcher J.T. Realmuto, Rays second baseman Brandon Lowe, Dodgers shortstop Corey Seager and Indians third baseman José Ramírez. Acuña was joined in the outfield by Michael Conforto of the Mets and Mike Yastrzemski of the San Francisco Giants. The designated hitter was 40-year-old Minnesota veteran Nelson Cruz.

The starting pitchers were Gerrit Cole of the Yankees, Clayton Kershaw of the Dodgers, Dinelson Lamet of the Padres, Kenta Maeda of the Twins and Hyun-Jin Ryu of the Toronto Blue Jays. Cleveland closer Brad Hand and NL Rookie of the Year Devin Williams from Milwaukee were the relievers.

Votes for the second annual All-MLB teams were cast by fans, media members, broadcasters, former players and other Major League Baseball officials.

Betts received the most votes from fans. Trout, deGrom and LeMahieu were the only players elected to the first team each of the past two years.

Trade, free agency talks

While it sounds like bringing back DJ LeMahieu remains the Yankees' top priority in free agency, the trade market could present other opportunities for the Bombers to pick up some key pieces.

According to reports, the Yankees have had talks with the Pirates involving starting pitcher Jameson Taillon and first baseman Josh Bell.

The second overall pick in the 2010 draft, the right-handed Taillon could be an intriguing rotation option for the Yankees, who will likely have Gerrit Cole, Jordan Montgomery, and a lot of questions after that.

The 6-foot-5 right-hander is under team control through the 2022 season, and he has a career ERA of 3.67 to go along with a 1.247 WHIP. While the talent is clearly there, Taillon has been held back by injuries, as he underwent Tommy John surgery in 2014 and then had surgery to repair a flexor tendon along with a UCL revision in 2019, which caused him to miss all of the 2020 season as well.

Meanwhile, Bell is a switch-hitting first baseman who lofted a career-best 37 home runs and 116 RBI in 2019, making his first All-Star appearance of his career. His numbers dropped off in 2020, though, as his average dipped 51 points to .226 to go along with a less-than-impressive .305 OBP. He struck out 59 times in 57 games during the shortened campaign.

Multiple reports now indicate that the Los Angeles Angels remain involved in talks with McCann.

Though the Angels are still in the mix for McCann, the "ball still appears to be in Mets' court."

The catcher would likely need to take less money to play for LA compared to what the Mets could offer, unless the Angels choose to spend a decent amount at catcher when the team has other, more pressing needs.

The Mets have not been in on J.T. Realmuto's market while in talks with McCann, but could re-engage on Realmuto if they can't find "common ground" on salary for a four-year deal.

The expectation is that Realmuto will receive a deal of five years or more in excess of $100 million, but it's not clear just how active his market will be.

The Mets also have interest in Hendriks.

While players like McCann and George Springer may take the spotlight when it comes to players Steve Cohen & Co. are interested in, Hendriks is one of the best back-end relievers on the market.

The past two seasons have seen dominance from Hendriks, who posted a 1.80 ERA in 2019 (an All-Star season) and a 1.78 ERA in the shortened 2020 campaign. He also has closing experience, splitting the role with Blake Treinen in 2019 and owning it last season after Treinen went to the Dodgers.

Hendriks is a power pitcher, using a high-90s fastball and a sharp breaking slider as his main way to get hitters out. His strikeout percentage of 40.2 last season and 37.3 in 2019 are both in the top three percent among all pitchers in the league.

An addition of Hendriks would generate an awfully scary back end of the Mets' bullpen that includes Edwin Diaz, Seth Lugo and the newest addition of Trevor May.

Chiefs, Steelers top AFC, but several teams could contend

KANSAS CITY (AP)—Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs are already in. No surprise for the defending Super Bowl champions.

Ben Roethlisberger and the Pittsburgh Steelers are undefeated no more, but they're also on the verge of clinching an AFC playoff spot.

After that, well, there are plenty of other contenders who might have something to say about the conference being just a top-heavy twosome.

Buffalo and Cleveland are 9-3, with Tennessee, Miami and Indianapolis all 8-4. They'd all be in the playoffs right now with this season's expanded, seven-team format.

Baltimore and Las Vegas are still in the mix at 7-5. And it's never smart to count out a Bill Belichick-coached team, especially with New England surging with four wins in its last five games to get to .500 at 6-6.

AFC EAST

Josh Allen and the Bills could make a massive statement when they take on the Steelers at home Sunday night. The third-year quarterback has played his way into the MVP conversation and another impressive performance—and a win—would justify that buzz. It would also put Buffalo well in line for its first division title since 1995.

But the Dolphins are still swimming right there with the Bills. Miami and rookie quarterback Tua Tagovailoa are just a game behind Buffalo in the race for the division, but host the Chiefs on Sunday. Still, there's a chance the regular-season finale at Buffalo on Jan. 3 could decide who finishes on top.

The Patriots have been that team for 11 straight years—with Tom Brady at quarterback, of course—but that streak appears in serious jeopardy.

AFC NORTH

The Steelers were just cruising along, giving those undefeated '72 Dolphins something to think about when—whoa!—the Washington Football Team dashed any dreams of perfection in Pittsburgh with a stunning 23-17 upset Monday night.

Now, winning the division is far from a certainty, especially with Baker Mayfield and the Browns on a four-game winning streak and looking like the scary squad many have been expecting. Pittsburgh still has a two-game lead and could clinch with a win and a Browns loss to Baltimore, but the division could come down to these two playing in what will likely be chilly Cleveland in the the regular-season finale.

Oh, and don't forget about Baltimore, which might be out of the division race, but got Lamar Jackson back from a one-game COVID-19 absence and snapped a three-game skid with a 34-17 win over Dallas on Tuesday night.

AFC SOUTH

Tennessee and Indianapolis split their two regular-season meetings and fittingly sit tied atop the division with four games left.

Ryan Tannehill and the Titans would seem to have the easier path to winning the South— which would be their first division title since 2008—with only one team with a winning record (Green Bay at 9-3) remaining on their schedule. They also have: at Jacksonville, home vs. Detroit (5-7) and wrap up the regular season at Houston (4-8).

GOAL

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all behind us and have done their part in our mission to develop soccer in our islands and our bid to become an ordinary member of the Asian Football Confederation," said Tan, as he addressed the NMIFA-member club officials and players and guests who witnessed the historic feat and join in the celebration at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Izuka, meanwhile, recalled the steps that the NMIFA has taken since 2005 to bring the association to where it is right now.

"It still feels so surreal, knowing how tough it is to sustain the program, especially at the very beginning. But here we are. We made it to this milestone and we are proud and thankful for the people who are with us in this journey," Izuka said.

Guam Football Association and Japan Football Association are on the top of the list of NMIFA supporters, especially at the early stage of its program.

"Guam may be our rivals on the pitch, but they are our partners since Day 1 of our program. JFA has been with us for over a decade, providing financial and technical (coaches) support to our youth program. We thanked GFA and JFA for their support through the years and of course, the East Asian Football Federation, which gave us associate membership status in 2007 and accepted us as full member the following year," Tan said.

More opportunities

NMIFA, since becoming an AFC associate member in 2008, has been given opportunities through the sport and other programs it offers.

"We are thankful to AFC for providing the CNMI, through NMIFA, opportunities for our youth, for developing their skills and encouraging them to get involved in physical activities," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, who witnessed NMIFA's promotion to full membership.

"We look forward to the continued development of the sport in our islands," Torres said.

These opportunities will indeed continue and more will come, as NMIFA will be entitled to assistance—financial, technical, logistics, and other benefits—accorded to full members

"We can access AFC funds as an AFC full member. This is huge and important to make our national team program sustainable. Strengthening the national team needs a long-term project, at least 10 years. To help our national team compete in Asia, we must work to develop players from grassroots and youth. We also need more quality and qualified coaches," NMIFA technical director and NMI head coach Michiteru Mita said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan, center, poses with vice president Vickie Izuka, right, and general secretary Ross Zapanta as they wait for the start of the 30th Asian Football Confederation Congress held virtually last Wednesday night.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Players in the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's grassroots program battle for the ball during an event last year at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville. With the NMIFA now a full member of the Asian Football Confederation, the FA's grassroots program will further get a boost.

"By utilizing the AFC fund and its many programs, we can expand our grassroots pool and more players will play in youth leagues under quality coaches. From there, we would get a bigger national team pool. Our national players will have more international tournaments or international exposure at a younger age," Mita added.

The technical director sees the AFC full membership as a boost to the NMIFA's bid to have a second facility after building the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville in 2018. Additional pitches would allow the national teams and others players to have more training days and games, giving them more opportunities to improve and catch up with the level of plays outside the islands.

Next step

While the NMI celebrates its full membership status with AFC, NMIFA Executive Committee member and Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan said the hard work will continue as they prepare for their next journey: gaining FIFA membership.

"Through lot of hard work and persistence, NMIFA has finally achieved an incredible goal (AFC full membership) and we're on to the next one," said Bogdan, who played for the first-ever CNMI National Men's Team in 2007.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Members of the CNMI national team pool celebrate after the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association got the nod to become an AFC ordinary member.

In this screen grab, Asian Football Confederation president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa congratulates Northern Mariana Islands Football Association for becoming the 47th member of AFC.

Giannis not focusing on signing supermax deal

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Sports

Ronaldo outshines Messi in Champions League

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GAINS AFC FULL MEMBERSHIP

Goal reached for NMI soccer

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Asian Football Confederation has granted the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association full membership status during the 30th AFC Congress held virtually last Wednesday night.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association reached a milestone last Wednesday night after earning full membership status from the Asian Football Confederation.

NMIFA's application for ordinary membership received an overwhelming support, as 40 out of the 42 member-countries present and entitled to vote (two abstained) at the 30th AFC Congress held virtually voted to admit the CNMI as the 47th full member of the confederation.

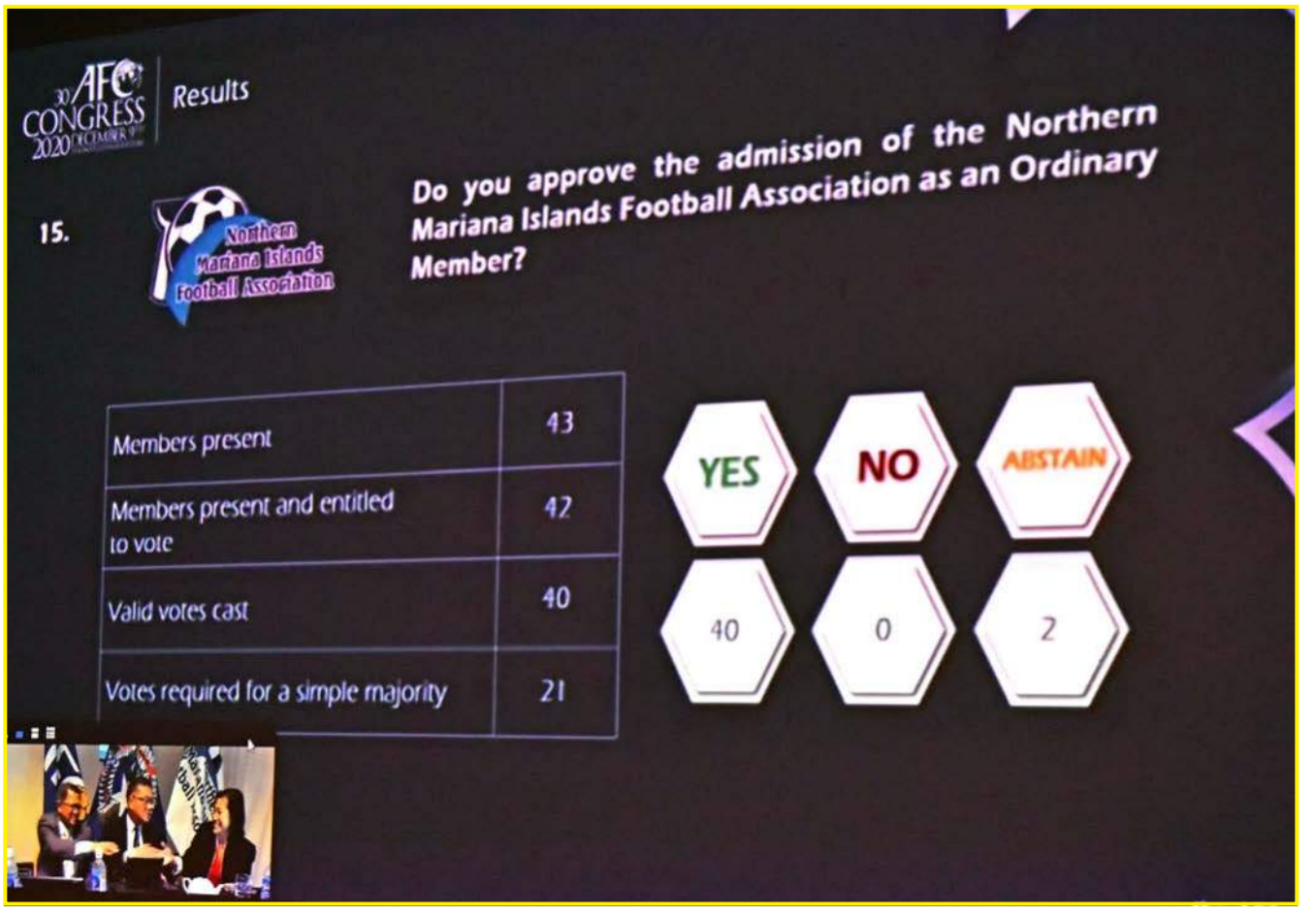
"Dear friends and colleagues, the Asian football family has casted their votes and the results are clear. We're proud to welcome the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association as the newest member of the AFC, and under its president Jerry Tan, I have no doubts that the game will continue to develop into greater heights. Congratulations and welcome," said AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa after AFC general secretary Dato' Windsor John announced the results of the poll.

Community effort

Tan, who attended the virtual AFC Congress with NMIFA vice president Vickie Izuka and general secretary Ross Zapanta, thanked everyone for making this historic moment for NMI soccer possible.

"We would like to thank the AFC family for the thrust and support. This milestone was a community effort. Players, coaches, parents, volunteers, game officials, the private sector, and our program sponsors, the CNMI government, and our supportive community are

See GOAL on Page 23



Inset screen grab photo shows Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan, center, vice president Vickie Izuka, right, and general secretary Ross Zapanta congratulating each other after 40 Asian Football Confederation members voted yes to the admission of NMIFA as ordinary member of the AFC.